

PIERCE COUNTY



Departments of
COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES

Outside In: A Plan to End Family Homelessness

**Implementation Plan for Ending Family Homelessness
in Pierce County**

July 30, 2010

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Executive Summary

The Washington Families Fund (administered by Building Changes), with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector funders, is expanding its work in targeted counties in Washington in order to test, in combination, emerging new concepts and strategies that have proven effective, individually, in reducing family homelessness in a number of communities across the United States.

To this end, the Foundation and Building Changes have asked Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties to develop a Plan to End Family Homelessness with the ultimate goal for each county to identify a series of systems change interventions related to five strategies the Foundation hypothesizes will have the greatest impact. These key concepts/strategies include prevention, coordinated entry, rapid re-housing, tailored programs and economic opportunities.

This planning process began with a snapshot of the inventory of the current housing, services, and funding for families with issues of homelessness, as well as an assessment of the work (as well as the gaps) in each of the key concept/strategy areas.

While the total number of families (and individuals represented in families) continues to rise in Pierce County, the number of families unsheltered remains relatively low. The majority are in emergency shelters, time-limited transitional housing, motels, and staying with family/friends.

The next phase of work developed goals, objectives, and strategies in line with the key concept areas. More specifically the intent was to target those specific changes that would have the biggest impact in changing the system focused on family homelessness to one that works toward sustainable change for each family and for the system as a whole. This new system is expected to be funder-driven, provider-informed, and client-centered. Four major goals were developed to represent this work:

1. Centralize Entry, Intake, and Referral
2. Make a Conceptual Shift to Prevention of Homelessness and Rapid Re-Housing
3. Engage Systems to Improve Economic and Educational Opportunities
4. Design a Management Information System that Accurately Captures Need and is Useful to End Users

The final phase of planning, which is completed in this document, is the implementation plan. In addition to a narrative summary of the plans for implementing the strategies, goals, outcomes, outputs, performance measures, and responsible parties are developed. Additional detail about partner systems and their potential funding is outlined.

Advocacy and evaluation efforts are discussed, and the next steps for acting on the implementation plan are noted.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Why Develop a Plan to End Family Homelessness?

Pierce County has an overall plan to end homelessness. While this plan was intended to apply to all populations, it does not go into much detail about how to apply specific strategies to ending homelessness for families with children.

The Washington Families Fund (administered by Building Changes), with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector funders, is seeking to expand its work in targeted counties in the Puget Sound region of Washington state in an effort to test emerging new concepts and strategies that have proven effective in reducing family homelessness in a number of communities across the United States.

The Foundation and Building Changes have asked Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties to develop plans specific to ending family homelessness with the ultimate goal being for each county to identify a series of systems change interventions related to five strategies the Foundation hypothesizes will have the greatest impact. These key concepts/strategies



include prevention, coordinated entry, rapid re-housing, tailored programs and economic opportunities.

The Family Homelessness Planning efforts being conducted in Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties are part of an expanding set of investments by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in the work of supporting system change with the result of ending family homelessness in Washington State. In addition

to the County Plans, the Foundation will also be investing in 1) Growing the role of Building Changes to assume a leadership position as the administrator of the expanding activities of the Washington Families Fund; 2) Convening key stakeholders in all three target counties to identify both existing and new opportunities for increased collaboration and coordination with activities that are already underway, (e.g., the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness); 3) Expanding advocacy activities related to the needs of homeless families; and 4) Creating a framework for measuring and evaluating the impact of this work.

The Plans are designed to be the first step in a long term relationship between the Counties, Building Changes, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Following the guidelines of the County Family Homelessness Plan initiative, this project will contain three distinct phases of work:

1. A Landscape Assessment Phase that contains a detailed cross-departmental/stakeholder analysis of the county's existing resources and systems for addressing the needs of homeless families;

2. A Strategy Development Phase that proposes specific strategies for improving systems within the county with particular emphasis on five topic areas (coordinated entry, tailored services, early intervention and prevention, rapid re-housing, and economic opportunities); and
3. An Implementation Planning Phase that describes specific timelines, responsibilities, and desired outcomes for implementing the strategies identified in Phase 2.

This strategic plan represents the work done in the second phase. Its purpose is to develop strategies in the five key areas mentioned above, and outlined here in more detail:

1. **Prevention:** Keeping families who are on the edge of homelessness housed and linked with the right services
2. **Coordinated Entry:** Implementation of a common way for families to access homeless services and for providers to quickly link families to the resources they need
3. **Rapid Re-Housing:** Moving families rapidly into permanent housing, whenever possible
4. **Tailored Programs:** Getting the right services at the right level- and at the right time- for each family
5. **Economic Opportunities:** Create stronger connections to family wage jobs for those coming out of or at risk of homelessness

The strategies include (1) service level (at the point where specific agency staff or their resources connect with specific families); (2) agency level, (3) homeless system-wide level, and (4) allied systems level that affect families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

These strategies were built upon the work completed in the first phase of this planning process- The Landscape Assessment Phase.

Contributors:

Many people contributed to the work in this document- including multiple content-specific workgroups, the Steering Committee for this initiative, and staff at Pierce County and Building Changes.

The Pierce County Executive's office began with a Steering Committee of government and private funders, as well as representatives from universities, housing authorities, workforce development, and public schools. Staff assigned to the project completed work under the direction of this Steering Committee.

After developing phase one of the planning (landscape assessment), the Steering Committee assigned work to three workgroups to develop strategies within each of the five pillars.

A Steering Committee Member chaired each of the workgroups. Community providers, County staff, and consultants from Building Changes, participated in the strategy development.

The Prevention and Re-housing Workgroup was chaired by Ken Ristine (Ben B. Cheney Foundation) and included the following membership:

Charlie Corrigan	Building Changes
Charlie Gray	Pierce County Housing Authority
Debbie Bergthold	City of Tacoma
Frank Walton	Salvation Army
Karen White-Taufest	YWCA
Lisa Conklin	Shared Housing
Mar Corpus	Tacoma Rescue Mission
Ron Murphy	Casey Family Programs
Stella Jones	Shared Housing
Troy Christensen	Pierce County
Ursula Kehaulani	Pierce County Community Services

The Coordinated Entry and Tailored Services Workgroup was chaired by Dr. Renee Houston (University of Puget Sound) and included the following membership:

Charlie Corrigan	Building Changes
Chris Morton	Associated Ministries
Cindy McNabb	Nativity House
Debbie Bergthold	City of Tacoma
Janne Hutchins	LASA
Mary Syslo-Seel	THA
Nola Renz	Helping Hand House
Roberta Marsh	South Sound Outreach
Rose Stidham	Metropolitan Development Council

Tamie Williams	Tacoma School District
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The Economic Opportunities Workgroup was chaired by Helen Myrick (United Way of Pierce County) and included the following membership:	
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Charlie Gray	Pierce County Housing Authority
Cristeen Crouchet	Clover Park Technical College
Dani Small	Tacoma Goodwill Industries
Debbie LeFleur	Washington Women’s Employment and Education
Diane Powers	City of Tacoma, Housing First
Duke Paulson	Metropolitan Development Council, Education Opportunity Center
Judy Colarusso	Tacoma Community College
Lori Ann Larsen	Pioneer Human Services
Mark Putnam	Building Changes
Susan Paredes	Tacoma Public Schools, McKinney-Vento
Tom Hilyard	Pierce County Community Services
Troy Christensen	Pierce County Human Services
Ursula Kehaulani	Pierce County Community Services
Vicky McLaurin	Department of Social and Health Services

The Data Steering Workgroup is chaired by Troy Christensen (Pierce County Human Services) and includes the following membership:	
Dave Stewart	Pierce County Human Services
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Gary Aden	Pierce County Community Services
Jeff Rodgers	Pierce County Community Services
Rae Anne Giron	Pierce County Community Services
Rodney Robinson	Helping Hand House
Sarah Teague	United Way of Pierce County
Shawn Parkhurst	United Way of Pierce County
Stephen Woolworth	Pacific Lutheran University
Tom Hilyard	Pierce County Community Services
Troy Christensen	Pierce County Human Services
Yvonne Eden	Associated Ministries

The Family Homelessness Steering Committee includes the following membership:	
Dave Bugher	Assistant Manager of Development Services, City of Lakewood
Dave Stewart	Director, Pierce County Human Services
Rev. David Alger	Faith Community Member
Helen Myrick	Vice President - Community Impact, United Way of

	Pierce County
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Ken Ristine	Senior Program Officer, Ben B. Cheney Foundation
Keri Rooney	Executive Director, Pierce County Executive's Office
Linda Nquyen	Chief Executive Officer, WorkForce Central
Michael Mirra	Executive Director, Tacoma Housing Authority
Dr. Renee Huston	Associate Professor, University of Puget Sound Department of Communication Studies
Ron Murphy	Casey Family Programs
Rose Lincoln Hamilton	President and Chief Executive Officer, The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
Dr. Stephen Woolworth	Associate Dean, Pacific Lutheran University
Tammy Williams	Tacoma Public Schools
Tom Hilyard	Director Pierce County Community Services
Troy Christensen	Mental Health Manager, Pierce County Human Services
Partners:	
Kollin Min	Program Officer, Pacific Northwest, Gates Foundation
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Emily Nolan	Washington Families Fund Manager, Building Changes
Mark Putnam	Consulting Services Manager, Building Changes
Ranita Jain	Building Changes/Westat
Facilitator/Consultant	
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PLANNING PHASE I: **Landscape Assessment***

The Landscape Assessment exercise was designed to help gain understanding in three areas: 1) the current housing and service provider system for families at risk of or experiencing homelessness; 2) the current allied systems (school districts, colleges and trade schools, Children's Administration, workforce development systems, etc.) that will prove useful in keeping families out of homelessness once they exit; and 3) the data systems and supports that provide us this information and the gaps in those data systems.

Information was gathered from a variety of sources: Pierce County's Homeless Management Information System; the One Night Point in Time Count conducted in January of each year; The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; written surveys and face to face interviews with providers of services and funders of services; focus groups of families recently housed; and information existing within the County system.

A major component of this assessment phase included the estimation of the number of families and individuals in families 1) experiencing*, and 2) at-risk of**, homelessness during a given year. Based on all the data available, the best estimates for Pierce County were determined to be:

1. During the 2009 Point in time count: 1,335 * individuals in 398 families
 - a. Not housed: 28 individuals in 10 families
 - b. In Emergency Shelters: 185 individuals in 50 families
 - c. In Transitional Housing: 1122 individuals in 338 families
2. Annual estimation derived from single day: 2,937 individuals in 877 families
3. Annual estimation of those at risk of homelessness: 4,806 individuals in 1,433 families

*Homeless = no fixed regular place to sleep at night (meant for human habitation), or in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations

**At-risk of Homelessness = in imminent danger of losing a fixed regular place to sleep (e.g., have an eviction notice, cannot pay rent or utilities, living temporarily with friends, staying in a motel without enough money to pay future rent, etc.)

Since 2005 the number of families experiencing homelessness has increased. That growth has been accounted for by the increase in transitional housing for families. This would seem to suggest a greater need for transitional housing for families. Transitional Housing is designed to assist families to gain permanent housing and become more self-sufficient. This has generally not been the case with families in Pierce County. While some find employment and wage progression, the majority still struggle to find affordable housing or obtain living wage jobs which allow them to make ends meet when they leave Transitional Housing.

*Link to Landscape Assessment:

<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/abtus/ourorg/humsvcs/System%20Landscape%20Assessment%20March%2009.pdf>

The Landscape Assessment also found that the experience for families attempting to access homeless housing and services resources is often a challenge. While there are centralized numbers a family can call to learn about the available resources, they are† then left on their own with a list of numbers to call. Those organizations may not have any openings, or may have openings for which the family does not qualify (e.g., wrong size unit, wrong specialization, wrong age of children, etc.).

There is a well-trained network of providers, but they are not coordinated or united by a single vision, and it is often difficult for families to find the appropriate match and receive the right services at the right level at the right time.

Additionally there is a lot of program activity currently in line with the five key areas:

Coordinated Entry:

There are two organizations within Pierce County that provide call centers for families experiencing homelessness searching for resources (among other populations). The United Way of Pierce County operates the local 2-1-1 line and provides information on shelters and transitional housing. Part of their process is to determine which shelters have openings so they can refer callers to the available resources. Associated Ministries has two components to their shelter program- shelter availability line and the severe weather program. Both programs were designed to help callers (individuals and families) find available shelter. Although, the United Way and Associated Ministries programs can be considered as primary sources for obtaining information regarding shelter, it still remains up to the individual or family searching for housing to discover and call each agency they are referred to or aware of.



The City of Tacoma, through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) process, initiated a centralized intake system. Their coordinated entry system is specifically for the HPRP program and not for all programs available for low-income/homeless families. The HPRP initiative is stimulus funded from the Federal Government to provide housing assistance for households at risk of homelessness and rapid re-housing programs for households that are homeless. These funds are available for individual single people, households with or without children, and families.

Prevention:

Several organizations in Pierce County have homeless prevention as part of their mission. But there is no coordinated process among agencies for preventing homelessness. Many organizations have rental assistance programs, but most of those organizations do not have housing stability or have access to ancillary services impacting the risk of

homelessness as part of that assistance. Additionally these organizations generally provide a single month's rent or a single month's utility. Without some additional assistance and some housing stability case management, families are not likely to avoid homelessness longer than one additional month.

Rapid Re-housing:

Depending upon the definition of re-housing, the organizations providing services to families experiencing homelessness do a relatively good job. The number of families in Pierce County experiencing street homelessness is very low. The majority of transitional housing programs prioritize women and families. Families leaving transitional housing, however, often do not have the economic stability required to decrease the odds of them becoming homeless in the future.

Tailored services:

Many organizations (69%) reported tailoring their services based upon the needs of the residents. The remainder (31%) provided the exact same services to every family, or rated families on a tiered system and provided services based on the tier rating.

Economic opportunity:

There are a number of organizations focusing on economic opportunities in Pierce County such as, WorkSource, the Goodwill, and Washington Women's Employment and Education (WWE). These organizations focus on the education, job training, job search preparation and job placement. These organizations have historically not been well-connected to the homeless systems providing services to families. While these organizations do not discriminate against people who have been homeless, there is no specific mechanism to ensure these agencies are reaching out or tailoring their programming to individuals with the unique needs associated with homelessness. WWE has recently begun some housing programming, including rental assistance and transitional housing. This has resulted in a much greater link for the women in their programs to receive services sensitive to the needs of people coming out of, or at risk of, homelessness. The connecting families currently in the homeless system would be a factor in changing a family's economic opportunity.

In addition to modeling tailored services after those organizations that have the best tailored care and assessments, the community mental health centers have a model for tailored care. This model consists of individual assessments along a variety of life areas that could be used as a model for tailoring services to families experiencing homelessness.

There were also key gaps identified in the assessment, as related to the five pillars:

Centralized intake:

- Currently no comprehensive centralized intake or coordinated entry system exists within Pierce County.
- There are two phone lines (Associated Ministries and United Way's 2-1-1 line) that have resources for shelter availability, but they do not screen applicants to determine if they meet criteria for those beds.

- Each agency uses their own intake/assessment tools to determine if a family/individual meets criteria for their programs.
- Individual agencies providing housing and services to families experiencing homelessness have been reluctant to provide details about their admission criteria, and to allow a centralization of intake.
- Associated Ministries is piloting a homeless prevention centralized intake for the City of Tacoma. It is hoped they will develop tools that will be helpful in a full coordinated entry system within the next year, and they have agreed to allow us to watch their progress to see what can be learned about our system.

Prevention:

- With the exception of the new Federal Stimulus funded Housing Prevention money, there has been no coordinated effort to prevent homelessness for families in Pierce County.
- Multiple organization provide rental and utility assistance to families at risk of homelessness, but this is usually for a single month within the program activity year, and does not come with stabilization services focused on helping the family retain their housing by improving their overall economic situation.

Rapid re-housing:

- With the exception of the new Federal Stimulus funded Rapid Re-housing, there has been no coordinated effort to rapidly re-house families experiencing homelessness.
- Multiple organizations do provide re-housing services for families, but many programs offer only brief housing assistance and no wrap around services to ensure stability. While this service is helpful to families in crisis, it is often applied to families who need significantly more than 30-90 days rental assistance. At the end of the assistance period if there is no improvement in the family’s overall situation they may be facing eviction again. Tailored supportive services, even for the duration of the financial assistance, is expected to provide the needed boost for the family to move past the crisis.



Tailored services:

Services of all types are cited as being needed but the top areas identified by our agencies include those that are most difficult to obtain within current funding guidelines and would provide the most significant impact. The top areas include:

- Transportation
- Child Care (including non-traditional childcare)
- Health Care
- Mental Health Services
- Substance Abuse Services
- Oftentimes organizations require program recipients to receive a packaged set of services, not necessarily based on the unique needs of the individual family

Economic opportunity:

- Opportunities need to be developed that will provide an enhanced skill set for those who lack education, work histories, or their work history does not include living wage employment
- These opportunities need to be integrated into initial comprehensive intake processes to ensure all families' economic needs (skills, interests, etc.) are assessed in early phases of assistance
- Integration of educational and occupational services needs to occur within the system of services provided to Pierce County families (currently the systems are very separate)
- Tied clearly to the issue of economic opportunity our families need access to programs that provide for high school completion or GED and educational opportunities that focus on creating a set of job skills that are useful in today's competitive work environment. Our homeless population in many cases do not have a significant work history and will require employability skills and remedial training to allow them to be successful in generating sufficient income to remain housed.

Data issues:

- The ultimate answer to gathering sufficient data about our populations in need would be to open the HMIS system county wide to all providers of housing and services and work diligently with agencies and their staff to require accurate and timely data entry so the system can be used to its maximum potential by both funders and providers. This will require a large number of safeguards be put in place to protect the confidential information that would be contained in the system.
- Customize the current HMIS system to ensure it allows for the data necessary to fully evaluate the system being enhanced.
- HMIS requirements are currently funder-driven. Therefore it will be imperative to ensure the value received by access to the data entered, equals or outweighs the cost of data collection and entry.

This Landscape Assessment Phase provided a context for the development of the strategy work that occurred in Phase 2 and is the focus of the remainder of this document.

System Change Approach

For lasting effective change to take place, a focus on shifting an entire system (and often related systems) is usually required. This begins with an analysis (the Landscape Assessment), and then culture shifts within the system. As part of the change discussion, guiding principles were developed. Some of the central principles include: ease of access for recipients of services, access outside usual business hours, care that meets the needs of service recipients, prevention of homelessness is always the best first option, and assistance that helps people permanently exit the system. For a complete list of the guiding principles and values, see the Strategic Plan.

Each individual goal, objective, and strategy was designed with this larger system strategy in mind. An attempt was made to find the greatest impact to the system with the greatest incentive for buy-in by the component parts.

The things that we have done historically are no longer sustainable. We are no longer talking about incremental changes. It is time to build something new and better that is more innovative and sustainable that significantly moves us toward ending homelessness.

Internal organizational structure shifts are occurring at the County-level, including the collaboration, and ultimate merger, of the Community and Human Services Departments. This includes bringing all plans to end homelessness for various populations into a single plan that addresses the unique needs of each population. Oversight and leadership structures are changing as well, with the addition of an Oversight Group of Funders designed to create policy alignment, funding strategies to line up with those policies, outreach and education to other funders, and monitoring of the success of the implementation plan. This will allow the funders to fully understand the systems change strategy and drive the system. Significant detail about the Oversight Group of Funders, their role, and their commitment is outlined in the Compact for Change (Appendix A).



A new Housing Provider Network, made up of the leaders of the housing and service providers within the system, will inform the funders of their experience as the system begins to take shape. And quarterly focus groups with recipients of services, as well as periodic interviews conducted by Westat, will ensure they system stays client-centered.

External organizational structure shifts are occurring as well. Relationships with key partners such as workforce development systems, local school districts, legal work in the arena of McKinney-Vento compliance, local universities, colleges, and trade schools, Children's Administration, etc. are developing in unprecedented ways.

The system will require changes at a variety of levels:

- The funder level
- The service recipient level
- The individual agency level
- The homeless housing and service provider system level
- The ancillary/partner system level (e.g., workforce development systems, children's systems, education systems, etc.)
- State and Federal policy level advocacy

The initial realignment goals will fall into four major categories:

1. Centralize Entry, Assessment and Referral
2. Make a Conceptual Shift to Prevention of Homelessness and Rapid Re-Housing
3. Engage Systems Designed to Enhance Economic and Educational Opportunities
4. Design a Management Information System that Accurately Captures Need, and is Useful to End Users

Goals, objectives, and strategies are outlined in the following pages, categorized by the titles listed above.

PLANNING PHASE II: **Strategic Planning***

As part of the strategy development phase the Steering Committee assigned tasks to workgroups on various topics. Below you will find a summary of three of those workgroups and their recommendations.

Early Intervention and Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing: The strategy embraced was a coordinated process among agencies for preventing homelessness which includes making a Conceptual Shift to Prevention of Homelessness and Rapid Re-Housing in close coordination with a centralized intake process. Some specific topics that received endorsement included:

- Assistance to stay in current housing and to avoid staying in a shelter, then to find permanent housing;
- Find any home-like environment where a family can stay temporarily, then continue to work with them to find permanent housing with necessary supports; and,
- As a last resort enter the shelter system, then find permanent housing as quickly as possible.

For families that are currently homeless the goal is to secure new housing in a rapid fashion with few requirements beyond the landlord tenant agreement and the supports required to ensure the re-housing is successful and sustainable. An offer of assistance with other needed services (see other pillar workgroups) will occur as well.

Strategy Recommendations:

- Coordinate all prevention activities throughout the County
- Ensure a tailored services approach is used with each family, so each family receives the level of support equal to their needs
- Refine housing inventory as it relates to rapid re-housing
- Develop a landlord incentive project (for families with histories that include barriers to new leases)
- Use data systems to collect longitudinal data to determine long-term success of investment

Coordinated Entry /Tailored Services Workgroup: The Centralized intake System will be operated by a single organization with multiple locations throughout the County to decrease the travel hardship on families. It will allow flexibility for assessments, including out[†]reach where needed and have hours that extend beyond traditional

* Link to Strategic Plan:

<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/abtus/ourorg/humsvcs/Strategic%20Plan%20Draft.pdf>

office/business hours. The hours of operation will extend beyond normal business hours to accommodate people working or searching for work.

Strategies Recommendations:

- Centralized- one organization, multiple sites, outreach capacity
- An initial telephone screening is completed to determine if the family has homeless prevention or re-housing needs (this can occur on a walk-in basis as well)
- Each family is offered a comprehensive assessment within one business day of the phone screening
- Matches are made for re-housing or prevention based upon the assessment data and the agency profiles to ensure each family receives services from an agency best suited for them.
- Each assessment is entered into the HMIS database real-time (laptops with wireless cards will be available for outreach assessments) and made available to the “receiving agency” with permission from the family.
- Services beyond housing and prevention that are assessed as needing attention will be outlined for the receiving agency to ensure those services are provided or brokered for the family.

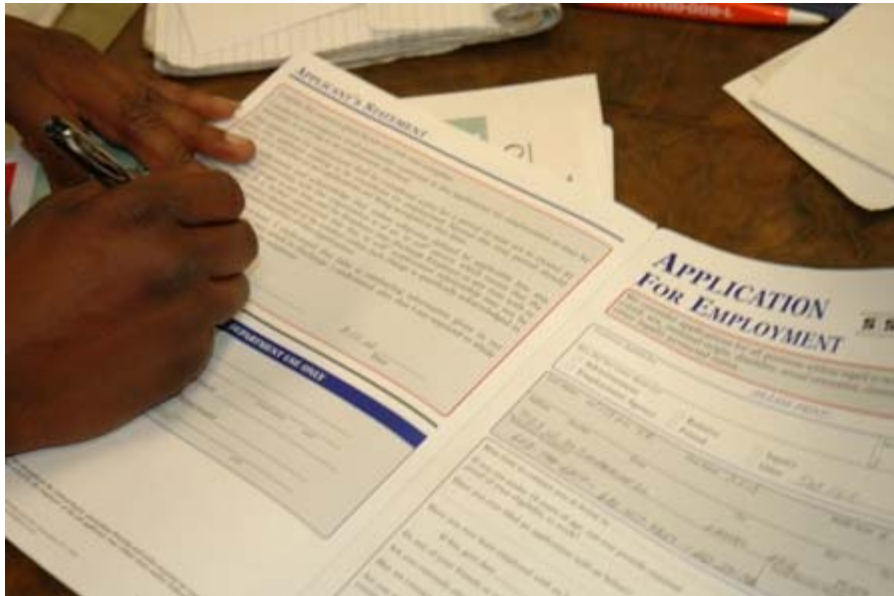
Economic Opportunities: This group has met seven times to inventory and analyze existing education and employment related resources within the homelessness system, and outside that system. The main goal of the group was to develop strategies to be recommended to the Steering Committee that would afford families coming out of, or at risk of homelessness, enhanced opportunities to access specialized services that would increase the chance of earning a family wage.

Strategy Recommendations:

1. Create intensive employment and education navigation services to families at risk of or experiencing, homelessness
2. Build cross-system partnerships between homeless housing/services workforce development providers and funders to ensure alignment in planning and implementing new economic opportunities for homeless families
3. Proactively develop a cadre of employers receptive to working with the target population, in conjunction with a unified provider effort

4. Provide capacity-building training and technical assistance to agencies serving families at risk of, or experiencing homelessness to ensure that staff have the resources to connect clients to economic opportunities
5. Engage in advocacy aimed at changing policies that impede economic opportunities for families experiencing, or at risk of homelessness
6. Streamline access to the employment system for families experiencing, or at risk of homelessness and homeless providers , by developing tools that provide information about existing employment and education services

The following goals were derived from the work done by the workgroups summarized above. These goals were then vetted with the Workgroups and the Steering Committee.



THE GOALS:

Goal #1: Centralize Entry, Assessment, And Referral

Objective #1.1: Create a Centralized Intake System

Strategy #1.1.1: The Centralized Intake System will be operated by a single organization. While the organization may sub-contract work to sub-sites (or outstation their own staff), it will be responsible for actual coordination of the entry system to ensure it is operating as designed- both structurally and functionally.

Strategy #1.1.2: Intake will be accessible to families. The centralized intake system will have multiple locations throughout the County to decrease the travel hardship on families. It will allow flexibility in location for assessments, including outreach where needed, and have hours that extend beyond traditional office/business hours. The centralized intake system presented in flow-chart form below can also be described in the following way:

Families can engage the centralized intake system in multiple ways:

1. Families can self-refer in person, or call the access phone number
2. Families can be referred by a provider whom the family has approached (in this case, the provider will be allowed to stay involved in the screening/assessment process, but the match will still be made with the best agency for that family's needs)
3. Coordinated Entry staff can outreach to family shelters to "case find" families in need of housing
4. Street outreach can occur if there is information that identifies a location where families have congregated
5. Public utilities and property managers can refer families determined to be at risk of homelessness due to unpaid rent or utilities
6. School Districts can refer based on identifying students experiencing or at risk of homelessness
7. Child Protective Services can refer if they intervene with families who appear at risk of homelessness.
8. Any other potential way in which a family can be identified as experiencing or at risk of homelessness

Objective #1.2: Match those in need of Prevention or Re-Housing to the provider that best fits their circumstances

Strategy #1.2.1: Each family will receive a comprehensive intake assessment in a timely fashion. Once identified, each family is screened to determine if they need either prevention or housing, and the adjunct services associated with such (housing stability services, healthcare services other support services, education/job training/placement services, etc.). Once screened as needing prevention or re-housing a full assessment is completed.

Strategy #1.2.2: Ensure the intake assessment represents all relevant life-domains. The intake assessment will be comprehensive and consist of, at least, screenings and

possibly detailed assessments of: housing history, especially barriers (with the goal to overcome the barriers), specific needs of the families (childcare, healthcare, mental health and chemical dependency care, domestic violence protection, etc.); specific needs of the household (housing, energy assistance, rental assistance, foreclosure prevention); specific needs of the adults (job/skills training, education, job placement, career planning); and specific needs of the children (academic assistance, enrollment in school, assistance with the school district meeting its McKinney-Vento responsibilities).

Objective #1.3: Tailor services to specific needs of each family

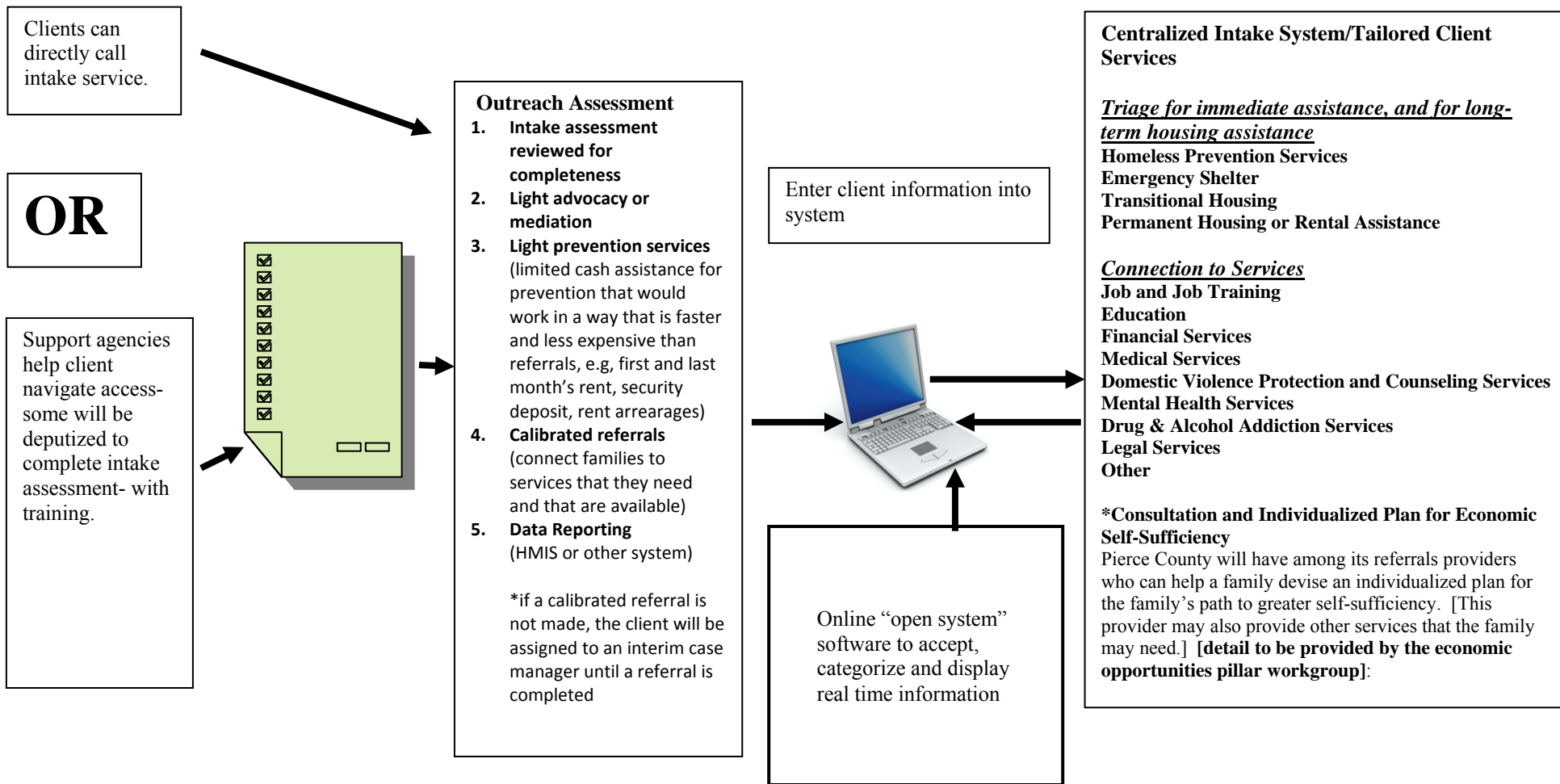
Strategy #1.3.1: Families are matched with re-housing or prevention organizations that specialize in their unique needs. Once assessed each family will be matched with housing and services that meet their unique needs. These matches will be made to meet the gaps identified in the assessment. When the client is matched with an organization based on need, there will often be additional needs that a particular organization cannot meet. The receiving organization will coordinate with other providers to ensure those needs are met. An important factor in making a good match is each agency’s description of their service expertise along a variety of continua in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). As time goes on, this agency information can be updated to greater specificity, improving the ability to match.

Strategy #1.3.2: Ensure homeless housing and service organizations are tailoring their services to the needs of their clients. When services are adequately tailored, families get the right services, at the right level, at the right time. Agencies will no longer require components of their program if they are not needed by an individual family. While this sounds like a fairly easy task, it is often quite difficult. Programs with limited funding develop program curriculum and use that curriculum to serve families. To customize care for each family requires more knowledge, skill, and resources than using a single plan for each family. Technical consultation will be provided to all agencies receiving referrals, to help them gain an increased understanding about how to use the assessment to develop a unique approach to each family. This will include both what the primary agency will provide, and what to coordinate with other specialty agencies. Over time, all agencies will improve their ability to respond to family needs in an effective and timely fashion.

Strategy #1.3.3: Ensure families (including those requesting prevention assistance) are not “referred” for funds, but “assisted through the entire process.” Each family will receive an individualized plan outlining their unique strengths and needs to assure all life domains requiring attention are addressed. It will be essential to accomplish this with those families only requesting financial assistance as well. This will decrease their chances of experiencing homelessness in the future. While some families may only need one-time financial assistance, we expect this to be fairly rare. All families receiving prevention funds will receive the full intake assessment to determine their unique needs, and the services necessary to help them pull out of homelessness permanently- including the focus on economic opportunities.

CENTRALIZED INTAKE FOR ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS IN PIERCE COUNTY

Edited by Coordinated Entry Workgroup (October 20, 2009)



Goal #2: Make A Conceptual Shift To Prevention Of Homelessness And Rapid Re-Housing

Objective #2.1: Make a systemic shift to prevent homelessness

Strategy #2.1.1: Approach each family with the goal to find a “natural” support and avoid entering a homeless shelter. Each family with no place to sleep at the time of assessment will be approached with the philosophy that finding immediate housing is emergent. Centralized intake staff will work to avoid an emergency shelter whenever possible. Priority will be placed on brainstorming with each family to search for other options (e.g., would rental assistance help to return to a home with whom the family was doubled up help tide them over until a better solution could be found?). This is a practice shift at the provider and family level.

Strategy #2.1.2: Focus new prevention resources on flexibility to support families in a natural setting over a professional one. As new prevention resources are developed, ensure they include the flexibility to allow rent payments to be paid (on a temporary basis) to motels, families doubled up, etc. This is a philosophical shift at the systems level.

Strategy #2.1.3: Ensure temporary prevention services include longer-term planning. Work with families who receive temporary prevention funds (for creative options to avoid emergency homeless shelters) to develop permanent solutions that include the supports necessary to build family stability and economic sustainability.

Objective #2.2: Coordinate and expand prevention resources

Strategy #2.2.1: Coordinate the prevention activities throughout the system. Coordinate funding efforts and their priorities. This will be accomplished by the establishment of a homeless funders group. The process will include most potential funders (including those providing match, but not specific awards) to design RFP's (or other application processes as determined by the funders group) that can be funded through multiple award and match funders.

1. Coordinate funding applications and reporting
 - a. Work with the funders group to have single applications that can be reviewed by the funders group and recommended to each of the funders' boards for further review and approval.
2. Coordinate services (such as case management) associated with prevention and re-housing to ensure consistency of training and resources.
3. Develop early warning systems through partnerships with agencies/organizations such as schools, DSHS Community Service Offices, CPS and Foster Care systems, the Health Departments Family Support Centers, and Public Utilities.
 - a. Use existing relationships with the above entities to identify those at risk of homelessness.
 - b. Develop a formal referral process from those agencies to the centralized intake to ensure a quick connection occurs once the family is identified as at-risk.

Objective #2.3: Coordinate housing (re-housing) availability and access

Strategy #2.3.1: Refine housing inventory as it relates to rapid re-housing. Centralize and coordinate housing resource manuals (e.g., 2-1-1-, Affordable Housing Consortium, etc.) and determine geographic distribution to ensure families will not have to relocate from their current community.

Strategy #2.3.2: The consolidated housing resource manual will have sections for the affordable and deeply affordable housing in each jurisdiction within Pierce County. Ensure each family remains in their community of preference, and within the same school district if they have school-aged children.

Objective #2.4: Develop Landlord Incentive Project

Strategy #2.4.1: Develop a risk reduction fund (an insurance risk pool of funds for damage, or clients who leave debt) to mitigate risk to property managers who agree to take in “higher-risk” families and guarantee payment if the family leaves unexpectedly or damages a unit.

Strategy #2.4.2: Provide landlords ease of availability to staff assistance when confronted with a tenant issue 7 days a week, and beyond normal business hours. Develop an on-call system for agencies to use/share that allows a quick response for property managers who call in for assistance after hours.

Strategy #2.4.3: Develop ongoing relationship building with potential landlords through the County geographically. Identify properties in all areas of the County, and develop agreements with property managers (similar to the Landlord Liaison Project in King County).

Goal #3: Engage Systems Designed To Improve Economic And Educational Opportunities

Objective #3.1: Create/enhance intensive employment and education navigation services for target population

Strategy #3.1.1: Create new (or enhance existing) employment and education specialist functions (not a training “add-on” for housing case managers) dedicated to enhancing economic opportunities for families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. These staff will collaborate with existing employment and education providers in Pierce County to develop career pathways for families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Leverage and build upon WorkSource’s one-stop system. Continue discussions with WorkForce Central to build upon their existing navigation system to ensure outreach and coordination with the centralized intake, with a focus on our target population. Use the Educational Opportunity Center model as a starting point for education navigation, altering to ensure outreach and coordination with the centralized intake, with a focus on our target population.

Strategy #3.1.2: Ensure a full client connection to employment and education services, addressing potential barriers as they arise. Develop the navigation positions beyond “information and referral” so clients are assisted with removal of barriers most face as they enter the workforce/job training and formal education

systems. Navigation will be an ongoing support even as the client is admitted into programs.

Strategy #3.1.3: Ensure every client quickly develops a career pathway plan (this can include multiple forms of education, training, job readiness, high school completion or equivalency, etc.). This planning should follow directly from the intake assessment. Additional information gathering may be necessary to ensure all relevant history is considered in the development of the plan. An initial plan can be created at the time of assessment, and enhanced through the navigation process.

Strategy #3.1.4: Promote asset building activities and financial education to ensure long-term self-sufficiency. Ensure the entire homeless and housing system understands these resources and how to access them for their clients.

Strategy #3.1.5: Promote employment/education loss-prevention through intensive job coaching and life skills management. Use prevention as a method to keep people employed and in school. For example, if lack of transportation is threatening success, quickly work to get alternate transportation on-line.

Strategy #3.1.6: Ensure real opportunities for post-secondary education are available through colleges, universities, and trade schools. Include formal partnerships for specialized programs/pathways (such as the College Success Foundation). Strengthen relationships with local colleges, universities, and trade schools at an executive level to create pathways for this target population to gain unique entry to each of these options. Ensure the navigators are fully involved in understanding and accessing these pathways.

Strategy #3.1.7: For school-aged children, promote education loss-prevention through support for McKinney-Vento liaisons, and other mechanisms to support children and their families until permanently housed- including the relationship between the schools and service providers (including re-entry for those who have dropped out). Assess children's educational needs through every intake. Work with the local liaisons to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. Look for creative ways to ensure families stay within the school districts that offer the most continuity for their children's education. Make this a top priority when re-housing.

Strategy #3.1.8: Streamline access to the employment system for families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and homeless providers, by developing tools that provide information about existing employment and education services. Conduct a more comprehensive appraisal of educational and employment programs in Pierce County. This assessment should result in a fuller understanding of existing services, availability of those services for the target population, the outcomes of those services, and the connections between those resources. Develop tools, such as program maps or online resource directories that simplify a client and case manager's research of programs and application process.

Objective #3.2: Build cross-system partnerships between homeless housing/services and workforce development providers

Strategy #3.2.1: Build cross-system partnerships between homeless housing/services and workforce development providers and funders to ensure alignment in planning and implementing new economic opportunities for homeless families. Engage workforce development providers, particularly WorkForce Central and the Workforce Development Council, in program planning and WorkSource in implementation. Build alignment between homeless housing/services and existing mainstream workforce development plans. Accomplish this through technical assistance to both the housing/service providers and the local WorkForce Central staff. Hold a public forum to bring the two groups together.

Strategy #3.2.2: Ensure the employment navigators are well connected with the housing/service providers so there can be a fluid transition in and out of navigation services as needed depending upon the families' individual needs. Families may move beyond needing navigation services. A mechanism will be in place to ensure ease of re-entry to navigation systems should additional assistance be needed.

Objective #3.3: Develop a cadre of employers receptive to working with the target population

Strategy #3.3.1: Proactively and strategically develop relationships with a group of employers receptive to working with the target population, in conjunction with a unified provider effort. Create and interface among housing and services providers in order to develop a coordinated strategy for engaging employers and developing jobs. Coordinate this through a single entity to avoid a duplication of efforts with employers. Work with the workforce development agencies to create some entry points specific to the target populations.

Strategy #3.3.2: Actively market existing, and develop new, incentives for employers to hire the target population (including, but not limited to, WorkSource Tacoma Business Connection). Coordinate this effort through the WorkForce Central's relationship with the WorkSource Tacoma Business Connection. Consider the possibility that self-employment can be a credible pathway for some members of the target population

Objective #3.4: Provide capacity-building training and technical assistance to agencies serving target population to ensure staff have resources to connect clients to economic opportunities

Strategy #3.4.1: Ensure that homeless housing and services staff have and utilize opportunities for training to improve their ability to motivate, coach, and connect clients to economic opportunities, including employment, education, and asset building activities. Include outreach, training, and technical consultation in these opportunities.

Strategy #3.4.2: Provide training to employment and education services staff, particularly those who primarily serve non-homeless clients, such as WorkSource, Vocational Rehabilitation, community colleges, and WorkFirst, to improve their ability to tailor their services to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Involve “non-agency” organizations (churches, social clubs, grassroots groups) in training whenever practical to broaden services beyond professional networks.

Objective #3.5: Evaluate the effectiveness of employment and education programs and incorporate learning into program improvements

Strategy #3.5.1: Ensure investments are supporting programs and projects that are results-oriented.

1. Create measurable outcomes related to economic opportunities.
2. Create measurable outcomes related to access to employment and education services.
3. Create measurable outcomes related to sustainable completion of educational and employment programs.
4. Coordinate with educational and employment systems to ensure improvements are made as needed to secure intended outcomes.
5. Ensure new initiatives secure the intended outcomes, or change course to make improvements.

Goal #4: Design A Management Information System That Accurately Captures Need, And Is Useful To End Users

Objective #4.1: Use data system to collect longitudinal data to determine long-term success of investment

Strategy #4.1.1: Develop minimum data element set for prevention and re-housing. During the implementation planning phase, identify the exact minimum data necessary to make the best decisions about the system, and gain a fuller understanding of those requesting prevention and re-housing.

Strategy #4.1.2: Determine how to legally and ethically collect data, specific to an individual or family, over the phone without requiring a physical signature. Work with King and Snohomish Counties to learn together how jurisdictions in other states have moved to a system where they can enter HMIS data without a signed consent form. Implement that, or something similar that will work for our local communities.

Strategy #4.1.3: Compare housing inventory to HMIS data on the number and profile of families to inform the priorities for housing development and future funding. Determine gaps in our available housing stock (shelter, transitional, permanent affordable, affordable home ownership, etc.) to use for planning for development.

Objective #4.2: Use data system to collect information on the need for services in Pierce County

Strategy #4.2.1: Determine initial data set necessary to determine need. Work with Westat and King and Snohomish Counties to ensure some consistency between counties. Use Landscape Assessment gaps to inform data needs.

Strategy #4.2.2: Enhance HMIS to ensure necessary data elements are built into the system. Use vendor consultant to update HMIS system, and to provide technical assistance training to all organizations entering data into HMIS.

Objective #4.3: Ensure real-time data is available in the system

Strategy #4.3.1: Require all participating agencies to enter data real-time into the HMIS system. “Real-time” data entry will include screening and assessment data, bed availability, and changes in programming.

Strategy #4.3.2: Communication between agencies sharing clients (e.g., centralized intake and a receiving agency) will be made easy. Communication will be encouraged between agencies with the permission of the family (once an assessment is completed and a match is made, the electronic version of the assessment is available to the receiving agency). Service history is available for anyone providing housing/services to a client to better understand what the family has accessed in the past and currently.

Objective #4.4: Ensure data system is designed to provide end users with reports they will find helpful

Strategy #4.4.1: Customizable reports will be available at the staff, project, program, agency, and system level, to ensure those required to enter data into the HMIS get a return on their investment. This information will be used to make improvements at all levels: system-wide, agency, family, individual support worker.

PLANNING PHASE III: **Implementation Detailing**

Phase II, the development of the strategic plan, was about determining what would need to be done to end family homelessness. Phase III describes how to go about fulfilling the strategic plan.

Phase one of the Implementation Plan (years one and two) includes: developing a Centralized Intake System with an enhanced Homeless Management Information System, a conceptual shift to prevention of homelessness, enhancements to Employment and Education systems to support families coming out of homelessness, and Technical Assistance to the provider agencies to tailor their services. In more detail, these include the following:

1. **Centralized Intake Assessment and Tracking (CIAT)** – Through a competitive qualification and proposal process, an organization will be selected to operate the entire system. The successful bidder will develop a centralized location (within the Tacoma City Limits), and at least two other field sites, where a comprehensive intake can be completed. All families at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness and in need of prevention or re-housing services will be processed through this centralized intake. In instances where the family cannot make it to one of the centralized intake locations, outreach must be available to conduct the assessment at a location more convenient for the family. Each family will be matched to an organization (based upon availability and family needs) that is best suited to meet their needs. When no organizational match is immediately available, the Centralized Intake will monitor and provide case management to help the family connect once an opening is available. In some cases where specialty organizations only accept referrals from within their own client base (e.g., some community mental health center housing programs, some housing authority programs) provisions will be made to ensure the new system does not slow down the referral process for families.

A single telephone number will be used to reach the Centralized Intake, and there will be adequate staffing to assist with each caller. A telephone screening will be conducted to determine if the family qualifies for prevention or re-housing services. If so, the standard will be for the family to receive a face-to-face intake assessment within one business day. If the family is unable to make it to the centralized intake or a field office, then an outreach must be offered to a secure location that is convenient for the family.



Each family qualifying for prevention or re-housing services will eventually be matched to an organization providing those services that appears to be the best match available. This is an essential function of the centralized intake, and should be paramount to all other activities.

The number of staff hired is undetermined at this point and will be clearer once a budget is drafted allowing respondents to develop a staffing plan. Positions will need to include assessors (to complete the comprehensive assessments), navigators (to assist families with figuring out how to secure all the various services needed), someone present to answer the telephones during operations, and at least one staff who is trained to handle crisis situations.

Some additional requirements are as follows:

- Hours of operation will extend beyond the normal business day, i.e., some evening and weekend hours will be available to allow for families working during the day to gain access outside of their workday.
- Standard for face-to-face comprehensive assessment is within one business day of the request for services.
- A focus on prevention must occur at the front door- for families reporting literal or pending homelessness; problem-solving will occur to determine if they can remain or return to their last place of residence until a more sustainable long-term plan can be developed.
- Each assessment will include a conversation about career planning, including education and employment possibilities.
- Formal partnerships with housing provider agencies, service provider agencies, workforce development agencies, public school districts, colleges and trade schools, Washington State Children’s Administration, and public utilities will be required.
- Assist receiving agencies who are struggling with HMIS, to ensure they are able to access required documents, enter their openings into the system, and fulfill functions that ensure the intake and referral system is functioning correctly
- Given the amazing diversity that exists in Pierce County, multi-cultural competence is essential for this program to successfully deliver its services. The successful candidate will build a diverse staffing team that mirrors the target service recipient population with bilingual capabilities.



In order to prepare for the best outcomes we are planning the following:

- Significantly enhance the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for Pierce County which will involve upgrading and customizing the system to ensure real-time data entry for both providers and the centralized intake. This will include software and hardware upgrades to ensure the efficiency of data entry and physical improvements to the location of the centralized intake, if necessary. The CIAT will

also include the capacity to provide outreach with staff utilizing laptops to travel to families who lack transportation resources

- The CIAT will have additional accessibility by being open to the public seven days per week and providing services during hours that expand beyond traditional office/business hours
 - Time-limited technical consultation from Bowman Systems to provide the customization and subsequent training to the community
 - A full-time HMIS consultant who will be used for upgrades to the HMIS upgrades, additional customization, customer service and trouble shooting
 - A technical assistant who will assist the providers with tailoring their services to ensure that families receive the specific services that they need and only the services that they need
 - Infrastructure construction for facilities improvement made by the CIAT provider (if needed)
 - Finalization of a screening and intake tool which would include a detailed and comprehensive assessment
 - Initial career/education discussion that leads to a plan
 - Potential for a benefits portal location on-site at the CIAT
 - Hiring and training of employees
 - Training of the providers
2. **A New Focus on Prevention** – each family will be approached with the goal to find a “natural” support and avoid entering a homeless shelter. Any family with no place to sleep at the time of assessment will be approached with the philosophy that finding immediate housing is emergent, including emergency shelter if necessary. As new prevention resources are developed they will include the flexibility to allow rent payments to be paid (on a temporary basis) to motels, families doubled up, etc. Families will move rapidly in to permanent housing whenever possible.

While this conceptual shift to a focus on prevention appears simple on the surface, it is expected to be somewhat of a challenge given the existing system’s long-standing reaction to homelessness for families- “try to find a shelter or transitional bed.” To assist with this shift, a learning opportunity will be planned in the fall (to include the successful CIAT bidder- or CIAT applicants, depending upon the timelines, and County lead staff) to Grand Rapids, Michigan to tour a program that has seen exceptional outcomes by making the conceptual shift to prevention.

There is no expectation that this will result in a need for fewer shelter beds in the foreseeable future, given that the current shelter demand significantly outweighs the supply.

- 3. Create and Intensify Systems to improve Economic and Employment Opportunities** – Create a new employment and education function dedicated to significantly improve employment and education opportunities resulting in living wage jobs. Ensure that every client quickly develops a career pathway plan that leads to self-sufficiency.

Through a major partnership with WorkForce Central, enhance their current employment navigation system to ensure it works well for families at risk of, or coming out of homelessness. Ensure WorkSource staff has the requisite training and skills to successfully assist this target population in preparation and movement toward careers that will allow wage progression at a level that sustains the families out of homelessness.

Conversations have begun with local community colleges and trade schools regarding educational programs and special assistance to families at risk of, or coming out of homelessness. There are local models, such as the Housing First educational pilot at Clover Park Technical College, the Opportunity Grant program for local trade and community colleges, and the SPRUCE program at Tacoma Community College.

- 4. Tailor the Services to the Specific Needs of Each Family** – Once assessed each family will be matched with housing and services that meet their own specific needs. These matches will be made to also meet the gaps identified in the assessment. The organization serving the family will also coordinate with other providers to ensure that all of the families' needs are met. Each agency will have a description of their service expertise along with a variety of continua in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This agency information will be continually updated with greater specificity which will allow for the continual improvement in matching the families.

This customization of care for each family requires more knowledge, skill, and resources than using a single plan for each family. Technical consultation will be provided to all agencies receiving referrals to help them gain an increased understanding about how to use the assessment to develop a unique approach to each family. This will include both what the primary agency will provide and what to coordinate with other specialty agencies (DSHS, Workforce Development, etc.). Central to this customization is ensuring the services delivered by every organization are culturally competent. Customizing based upon needs alone, and not based upon an educated understanding of the unique aspects of cultural differences falls short of the assistance families truly need and deserve. Over time, all agencies will improve their ability to respond to family needs in an effective, timely fashion.

Partnerships

Major partnerships have been created in the community and multi-jurisdictional collaborations with our cities and towns provide a strong basis for a unified approach to addressing regional problems

- Major divisions within the Pierce County Human and Community Services Department (the executive offices, the leadership from both departments and a number of designated staff members are working on the initiative)
- City of Tacoma Human Services (The Executive Director of Human Services is a member of the Steering Committee and the City will provide a staff member who will spend half-time devoted to ensuring that their funding decisions reflects the goals of the initiative)
- City of Lakewood (the Director of Community Development for the city of Lakewood is on the Steering Committee and the Oversight Group of Funders)
- Tacoma and Pierce County Housing Authorities (Leadership for both Housing Authorities are actively involved in the project- at the planning, funding, and match levels)
- The Oversight Group of Funders who have signed an agreement (the Compact for Change, see appendix A)
- The Housing Providers Network (This group continues to advise the process- their input/feedback will be a crucial to the Funder's Group during the implementation process)
- The Data Solutions Steering Workgroup (This group will continue to meet during the first phase of implementation and is in the process of evaluating current intake/assessment documents and creating a high quality assessment for the Centralized Intake)
- United Way of Pierce County and United Way 211 (The vice president of United Way was part of the Steering Committee and chaired one of the workgroups. The staff from the 211 program are participating in the Data Workgroup and providing an important perspective on the intake process; United Way will also sit on the Oversight Group of Funders)



- The Workforce Development Council/WorkForce Central (The Chief Executive Officer of WorkForce Central is a member of the Steering Committee, the Oversight Group of Funders and is very actively engaged in the initiative; also investigating ways for the Centralized Intake to communicate with WorkForce Central's Data System)
- The Washington State Children's Administration Department (They assigned a lead to work on this initiative; they are currently involved in a Homeless Grant Assistance Program-funded project in Pierce County and working closely with multiple providers on a project that houses families reuniting with their children as they comply with drug court requirements)
- The Department of Social and Health Services (They are involved at the state and local level on this initiative, including preliminary discussions to have a benefits portal located at the Centralized Intake)
- The McKinney-Vento Liaisons of the School Districts (This group has invited the County staff to provide a presentation and update at their fall meeting, and Pierce County is working closely with the three most dedicated school districts as part of this planning process- Tacoma, Sumner, and Bethel School Districts)

Throughout the Implementation Planning Phase there will be a continual effort to keep all identified partners informed and engaged in the process. There will be a significant effort to pay attention to transitioning leadership roles and ensuring that all of the major participants are actively involved in the process.

Staffing (for a proposed budget of the first year, see Appendix D)

A number of staff will be hired to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Implementation Plan are achievable. They include:

- .5 FTE Project Lead (liaison to the Washington Families Fund, Pierce County Executive, and overall project director)
- A Full-time Lead Planner (lead for all planning and implementation efforts)
- A Full-time Implementation Specialist (focusing on tailoring services, prevention focus, and other implementation sequencing)
- .5 FTE planner with the City of Tacoma (ensure that the providers receiving their funds will comply with this initiative)
- A Fulltime HMIS Technical Assistant (will provide ongoing training, troubleshooting, and customer service to the entire system(s) utilizing the HMIS data system)

Communications Plan

The communications plan has been an informal part of our ongoing strategy to gain input and buy-in from the community. Presentations have been made to City of Tacoma Council, the Pierce County Council, the Tacoma/Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness, the Tacoma/Pierce County Continuum of Care and the Human Services Coalition.

We understand what a crucial role communications will play in the successful outcomes of our strategies. The lead entity for the formal Communications Plan will be Building Changes. Pierce County staff will continue to communicate with local funders, providers and politicians to keep them updated, include their feedback and to address any concerns that arise about the planning process.

The preliminary list of the audiences we plan to approach first with our Communication Plan are:

1. Providers
2. Funders
3. Elected Officials
4. Homeless Coalitions
5. Organizations representing underserved populations (the Black Collective, the Queer Collective, Centro Latino, Korean Women's Association, etc.)
6. Local emergency responders

We are also reaching out to shelters and transitional housing programs in order to inform families and to get insights from their experience and make sure that we are on track with our implementation efforts.

Through a generous grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funding is available to build the infrastructure supporting the changes to the system of family homelessness. This infrastructure funding will be spent on a variety of items, including the staffing outlined early in this section, as well as the following:

- Systemic upgrades to the current HMIS database (a Bowman Systems product, Service Point). These upgrades will include additional modules and licenses for report-writing, and the capacity for the entire system of providers to use desktop features to customize reports to enhance their own awareness and productivity;

- Purchasing of hardware- specifically laptop computers with wireless cards to allow the Centralized Intake staff to conduct assessments, access data, and input data while in the field;
- Desktop computers for providers whose internal systems are so old and inefficient that they cannot benefit from the capacity of HMIS;
- Building infrastructure upgrades for the successful Centralized Intake bidder (should they require it);
- Multicultural competence programming- a series of trainings/workshops for family housing/service providers- The intent of this training series is to raise awareness of the disparate impact poverty and homelessness have on people of color (African-Americans especially). While the impact may not be affected by the homeless system, the satisfaction of services can be. Footnoted below is detail on both the disparity of representation and satisfaction within our local community;⁴
- A retreat for the Oversight Group of Funders to begin their work of aligning policies to be consistent with the strategic plan, and ultimately aligning their funding with those policies; and,
- A learning opportunity for the Centralized Intake and infrastructure staff to two promising programs in the mid-west that focus on prevention through the use of centralized intake.

Goals and Outcomes

There is only one clear goal for this initiative- to end family homelessness. There are multiple strategies (above), outputs, outcomes, and measures however (below).

Performance measures are assigned to both outputs and outcomes in this case. The graphic below shows the relationship between the planning, strategizing, and outputting processes, and further how they relate to the outcomes and ultimately the goal to end family homelessness. Output measurements are to determine if the assigned work was accomplished, and outcome measurements are to determine if the assigned work resulted in the intended impact on the system.

As the flow moves from planning to strategizing to outputting, and ultimately to the outcomes associated with ending family homelessness, the degree of influence or control over the process decreases. There is a hypothetical link between the activity of outputting and the intended effect or impact on family homelessness.



⁴ In Pierce County African Americans represent 7% of the population level, and 28% of those experiencing homelessness. They also report for services received than their white counterparts- 20% vs. 80%. Given an essential component of this initiative, it is imperative that service providers better serve the unique needs of each sub-population and each individual.

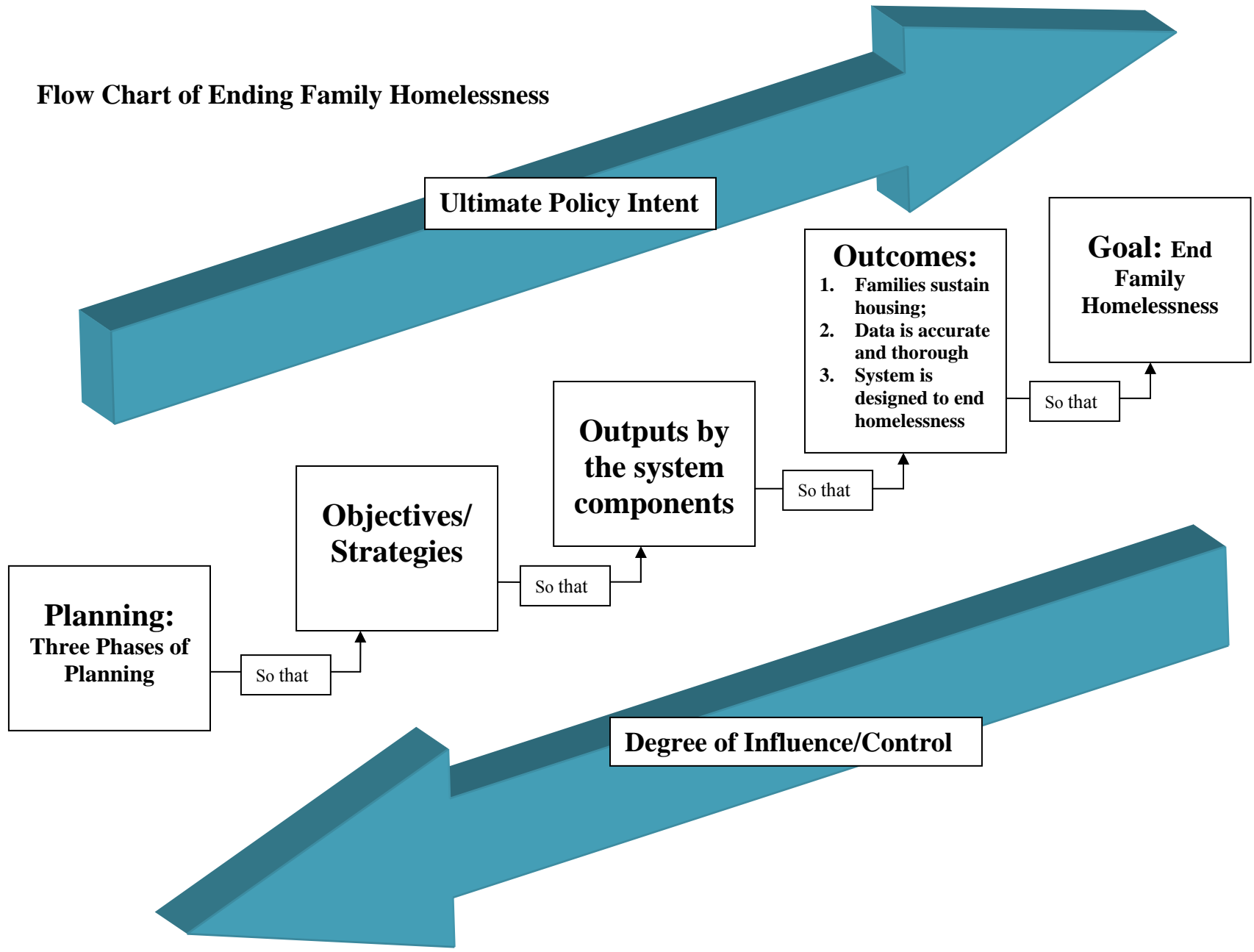
Even when the hypothetical link between outputs and outcomes becomes a reality, there are other political, social and economic factors that can impact the outcomes in ways that are not as easily measurable.

Below the flow chart is a table outlining the three major outcomes: 1) Families have a greater opportunity to sustain housing; 2) Data is available thoroughly, in real time, to providers; and 3) System is designed to support ending homelessness.

Each of these three outcomes includes a list of related outputs, which phase of implementation the output is expected to occur in, which strategy the output relates to in the strategic plan, who is responsible for each output, and the target quarter for implementation.

Below each set of outputs is a set of measures that hypothetically will reveal if the output impacted the outcome, and from where the sources of data will come for each measure.

Flow Chart of Ending Family Homelessness



The following graphic outlines the difference between the system as it exists today and the system proposed to end family homelessness- specifically across the two strategies of centralized intake and tailored services.

Today's System

Agencies serve families who schedule an appointment with them



Families receive the services available at the agency where they located re-housing or prevention services, regardless of whether they need those specific services



Families receive services where they are available.



Families travel to multiple agencies to receive screening for eligibility for re-housing, prevention, and other services



Families call multiple programs daily to determine where an opening exists



Until re-housing for prevention services are located, families receive no other services



System to End Family Homelessness

Families who need re-housing or prevention assistance are considered part of the system, and the system locates them and helps them find re-housing and prevention services

Families receive the services they need when they need them

Families receive services in the community of their choosing- preferable in the school district where their children already attend school

Families travel to a single site in their community, or if that is a hardship, the intake assessor travels to the family

Families call a single location, where they have an assistant assigned to continue working on finding prevention or housing services on behalf of the family

Families receive necessary services even while awaiting housing or prevention services

Goal: End Family Homelessness

Outcome/Output/Measurement	Phase	Objective #	Responsible Party	Target Quarter
Outcome #1: Families have greater opportunity to sustain housing (families have the resources, including income, to no longer be at risk of homelessness)				
Output #1.1: A centralized intake system is designed and implemented	1	1.1	Pierce County and successful vendor applicant	1Q 2011
Output #1.2: Families receive a comprehensive intake assessment within one business day	1	1.1	Successful vendor applicant	1Q 2011, and ongoing
Output #1.3: WorkForce Central, and local colleges and trade schools develop skills for assisting target families 1.3.1: Discussions of employment/education begin at intake	2	3.1	Pierce County, Centralized Intake, and partner systems	3Q 2011, and ongoing
Output #1.4: Provide technical assistance to agencies building employment services	2	3.3, 3.4	Pierce County and WorkForce Central	1Q 2012, and ongoing
<i>Measurement 1.1:</i> The number of days unsheltered after contact with Centralized Intake decreases from year one of <i>prevention</i> implementation to year two			HMIS	
<i>Measurement 1.2:</i> The number of families requiring emergency shelter decreases from year one of <i>prevention</i> implementation to year three			HMIS	
<i>Measurement 1.3:</i> The number of days in emergency shelter from year one of <i>prevention</i> implementation to year three decreases			HMIS	
<i>Measurement 1.4:</i> More families leave to permanent housing (preventing future homeless episodes) in years two and three than in year one			HMIS	
<i>Measurement 1.5:</i> More families leave with a living			HMIS	

wage income 1.5.1: Families have an education/employment plan in place within 30 days of intake				
Measurement 1.6: The number of families that re-enter the system after successfully exiting decreases between by year three				
<u>Outcome #2: Data is available, in real time, to providers</u>				
Output #2.1: Agencies tailor the services they provide to what the family needs	2	1.2, 1.3	Provider agencies, Pierce County, City of Tacoma, all funders	3Q 2011
Output #2.2: Use data group to develop longitudinal data set and more accurate estimation of need in Pierce County	1	4.1, 4.2	Data Implementation Committee	1Q 2011
Output #2.3: Provide high-level HMIS customer service and support to providers	1	4.3	Pierce County	1Q 2011
Output #2.4: Develop HMIS upgrades/enhancements keeping end-user ease of use in mind	1	4.4	Data Implementation Committee, Pierce County, Bowman Systems	4Q 2010
Measurement 2.1: Data is accurate, timely, and informative in decision-making 2.1.1: Technical assistance is available, helpful and timely 2.1.2: HMIS system is easy to navigate and provides end-users with useful information			Survey of Providers, Westat	
Measurement 2.2: Families get the services they need when they need them 2.2.1: Providers receive referrals that are good match for their programs			Survey of Providers; Westat; County contract monitoring	

2.2.2: Agencies have a system in place for providing an individualized plan to each family seeking services				
Measurement 2.3: On-going communication and feedback between County and providers occurs, to ensure adherence to long-term plan				Westat, Survey of Providers
Measurement 2.4: The amount of resources agencies spend on securing project funding for homeless families decreases 2.4.1: Funders align policies and funding to support strategic plan				Survey of Providers; Survey of Oversight Group of Funders
Outcome #3: System is designed to support ending homelessness				
Output #3.1: A systemic shift is made to prevent homelessness both before families become homeless, and as they exit the system	1	2.1	Centralized Intake (successful vendor applicant), Pierce County, City of Tacoma, all providers, all funders	1Q 2011; ongoing
Output #3.2: Prevention Services are coordinated and expanded over time	2	2.2	Centralized Intake (successful vendor applicant), Pierce County, City of Tacoma, all providers, all funders	1Q 2011; 3Q 2012
Output #3.3: Housing resources are coordinated, and existing affordable housing is geographically mapped to ensure families stay in their communities	2	2.3	Centralized Intake	1Q 2012
Output #3.4: A landlord-tenant program is developed and on-line	2	2.4	Pierce County, City of Tacoma, City of Lakewood, all	3Q 2012

			providers	
Output #3.5: Partnerships with WorkForce Central, local colleges and trade schools, local school districts, DSHS and Children’s Administration are developed and/or strengthened	1	3.2	Pierce County and partner systems	4Q 2010; ongoing
Output #3.6: Develop evaluation criteria for employment and education systems’ responses to target population	2	3.5	Develop a new committee made up of workforce development organizations, colleges and trade schools to evaluate their response to this target population	2Q 2011
Output #3.7: On-going communication occurs with funders, providers, and families to ensure services are creating stability and removing obstacles 3.7.1: Communication roll-out with all funders, providers, and ancillary partner systems (Ph.1, and annually) 3.7.2: Quarterly meetings with families in shelters and/or transitional housing programs (intent is to invite ongoing feedback about systems changes)	Both	All	Pierce County, Funders, Cities of Tacoma and Lakewood, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Building Changes	Ongoing
Measurement 3.1: Families get an intake within one business day of request for services 3.1.1: Centralized Intake is comprehensive and includes access to Workforce portals and DSHS portals 3.1.2: Centralized intake is accessible and available in multiple locations and can also be accessed by people with limited English			Contract monitoring; Survey of Providers; Westat	

language skills			
Measurement 3.2: The number of families experiencing or at serious risk of homelessness decreases over second and third year of implementation			Point in Time Count; HMIS
Measurement 3.3: Multiple systems are involved to support identification, and long-term sustainability, of families			Survey of Providers; Westat
Measurement 3.4.: First line response shifts from emergency shelter to prevention			Contract Monitoring; Westat
Measurement 3.5: System continues to adapt according to family and providers needs			Westat; Oversight Group of Funders
Measurement 3.6: Partnerships with ancillary partner systems will be strengthened through collaboration			Survey of Providers; Westat

*Note: Phase 1 will occur over the first year; Phase 2 will begin in year two and continue through year three

**Objectives are derived from the Strategic Plan

Implementation Sequencing

While each output listed above is targeted for a specific quarter, the outputs are categorized by outcome, and not chronologically. Below you can view the same information, and other activities not listed above, but in their temporal context.

3Q 2010:

This quarter will be focused on completing the Implementation Plan, preparing the RFP for release (in cooperation with Building Changes and the Oversight Group of Funders), and general preparation for the roll-out to begin in January, 2011. More specifically:

- Release RFP for Centralized Intake and Prevention
- Attending Conference on Hearth/HMIS
- Coordinate with Building Changes and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Communications office of Pierce County, on formal communications planning and release
- Building Changes and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will hold briefings with Federal agencies and legislative leaders on local, state and national levels which will include King and Snohomish counties whenever possible
- Develop plan for linking innovation grants with other funding
- Develop contract for City of Tacoma infrastructure funding
- Finalize infrastructure grant budget

4Q 2010:

This quarter will be spent training and orienting staff hired with infrastructure funding, preparing the HMIS system for the demand coming in January 2011, working with providers to understand the strategic and implementation plans, further developing the funding details and relationships with mainstream partners, and enhance the understanding of the level of match that may be available within these systems.

- Award Centralized Intake and Prevention Grants
- Strengthening of partnerships with Workforce Central, Children's Administration, colleges and trade schools, local school districts, and DSHS
- Develop HMIS upgrades/enhancements with user-friendly end-game in mind
- Hiring of Tailored Services Specialist, HMIS Specialist, .5 FTE City of Tacoma Planner
- Continue informal communications with providers, funders, and elected officials
- Learning Opportunity in Grand Rapids, MI to understand a successful model of Centralized Intake

1Q 2011:

This period will focus on initial implementation of Centralized Intake and the prevention aspects of this plan, significant enhancements to provider-support of HMIS, further develop the Oversight Group of Funders role and activities, initial roll-out of cultural competency trainings for providers, and begin consolidating of information on prevention and re-housing throughout the county.

- Implement Centralized Intake
- Comprehensive intake assessment for families requesting assistance
- Develop longitudinal data set and more accurate estimation of need
- Systemic shift to prevention of homelessness at front door
- Kickoff retreat for funders
- Begin high-level HMIS customer service and support to providers
- Comprehensive Cultural Competency Training for all Providers
- Major formal communications with providers, funders, and elected officials
- Building Changes and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will hold briefings in Olympia with key legislative representatives to inform of initial implementation plans

3Q 2011:

This period will focus mostly on bringing mainstream services more closely on-board in an effort to reduce inefficiencies within these systems (as related to homelessness), and ensure all contracts from major funders call for use of Centralized Intake, require tailoring of services, and have a focus on a defined set of values and principles, while demonstrating behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable the organization to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

- WorkForce Central and Trade Schools and Colleges develop skills for assisting target families
- Begin tailoring of services by all providers

1Q 2012:

This period will focus on finalizing the re-housing and prevention resources in Pierce County, development of evaluation of employment/education systems, and a review and midcourse corrections as indicated (with communications back to the community stakeholders).

- Technical Employment Assistance to housing providers
- Re-housing resources are coordinated and geographically mapped
- Develop evaluation criteria for employment/education systems' responses to target population

- Building Changes and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation will communicate with federal agencies and legislative leaders to provide progress on outcomes from first year of implementation
- Pierce County staff will provide updates on plans and lessons learned to providers, funders and elected officials

3Q 2012:

This period will focus on expanding the prevention aspects of the system and developing a Landlord-Tenant program.

- Expansion and coordination of prevention funding and services
- Develop Landlord-Tenant program- modeled after the pilot in King County (Landlord Liaison Project)

*For a full Work Plan Timeline see Appendix C

Outcome/Output Review

In an effort to make the best sense out of the data that is collected on outputs and outcomes, it will be important for regular periodic reviews of that data on both a formal and informal basis. Below is a schedule of activity to allow for analysis and/or review at particular intervals.

- County staff will review data on a quarterly basis to ensure data integrity and completion.
- Data reports on the measurement items listed above will be provided to the Oversight Group of Funders and the Homeless Housing Provider Network twice annually for informational purposes and to prompt discussion.
- At the end of year two, and annually thereafter, the Oversight Group of Funders will look at trends from the beginning of implementation to current date, as well as compare year to year. These trends will be analyzed to determine if the implementation plan needs to be adjusted to account for outcomes.
- Additional performance measures may be added at any point based upon information derived from the data.



Mainstream Work Occurring Related to Family Homelessness

There is a lot of work being accomplished, and planned, in systems outside the homeless housing and provider system. Many mainstream services have daily contact with families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and many of them are partnering with the current efforts in Pierce County to end family homelessness.

There are inefficiencies in many mainstream systems with regard to homelessness. This plan helps pull them together to assist in policy change surrounding delivery of these mainstream services. This allows better utilization of their resources and reduces inefficiencies resulting in additional supports in ending homelessness. The following paragraphs outline some of these efforts.

Ongoing discussions are occurring with the **Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction**, the **Puget Sound Educational Service District**, the local **McKinney-Vento Liaisons** for the public school districts, and **Columbia Legal Services** to better understand the manner in which local public schools identify, report, and respond to student and family homelessness. While school-aged children attending school do not represent all families in Pierce County, they do represent the vast majority. An understanding of the local requirements of school districts and how to ensure compliance with these requirements can assist us in identifying students in families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This is especially important given that the other major source of information on families with homelessness issues does not include those who are living in motels or doubling up with another family (those categorized at “at-risk” of homelessness). These discussions, which continue, have contributed to elements of this strategic plan.



Discussions and planning have occurred on many levels regarding the **collection of data** for the following uses: 1) tracking families through the system; 2) tracking beds within the system; 3) individual organizational feedback (by case manager, project, program, agency); 4) system-wide information for ongoing analysis for systems improvement; 5) Tri-County informational feedback on the implementation of the five pillars; and process and formative feedback from a study

perspective. These discussions have occurred with the planning team, funders, providers, the Gates Foundation, Building Changes, and Westat (a national research and consulting firm in Rockville, MD, selected to conduct the project evaluation study). All of this information will inform the developmental improvements to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in Pierce County. Pierce County currently uses Service Point, a Bowman Systems product, that can be modified to perform all the tasks intended with this initiative. But those improvements will need to be informed by all of these processes and constituent groups.

Washington State's Children's Administration has assigned a representative from the Region V office to be the lead contact for this initiative. Discussions have begun on how to best partner as we move forward to work with families reuniting with their children and families at risk of losing custody of their children. Currently the Region V administration is working on a Homeless Grant Assistance Program with several local family homeless providers and Pierce County Community Services. This has opened the door for some conversations about how to move forward with the initiative to end family homelessness in Pierce County.

Recent discussions have occurred regarding the engagement of the **faith community**. The **Lutheran Public Policy Office** is working to engage the faith community to help expedite ending homelessness. They will coordinate their work with the three Counties initially through Lutheran churches, moving then to an ecumenical approach, and finally interfaith. This is an area that has been a concern of the local Steering Committee on Ending Family Homelessness, and this new opportunity provides an avenue through which to systematically engage the faith community.

Funding Detail

Innovation funding will become available in 2010 and 2011 in the following amounts:

Year	Building Changes Award	Pierce County Match	Total
2010:	\$607,500	\$1,518,750	\$2,126,250
2011:	\$768,750	\$1,921,875	\$2,690,625
2012:	\$768,750	\$1,921,875	\$2,690,625
2013:	\$768,750	\$1,921,875	\$2,690,625
2014:	\$768,750	\$1,921,875	\$2,690,625

It is important to note that the Building Changes Innovation grants are not renewable, so the amount shown representing their available funding will be for new innovations each year.

Some new funding match has been set aside from an increase in 2163 funding to Pierce County Community Services. This amount is up to approximately \$1.2M/year for four years.

Additional match will be considered for a variety of existing family housing/service programs that accept technical assistance to change the way they do business (use of the centralized intake, tailoring their services, and focus on prevention) to bring them in line with the systems change outlined in this strategic plan. Currently more than \$17M is invested in housing, services, and operations for families experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Pierce County. This entire amount is potentially available as match if the right focus and shift is placed upon advancing the strategic plan to shift the system. That said, it is essential that applications fall in line with the priorities set by the Oversight group of Funders for innovations that are needed to support the system as it moves toward ending family homelessness. Simply adjusting the way business is done to attract money for infusion into current programming will not be sufficient. New and innovative changes in how to approach the population and assist them to sustainability will be required. The existing funding system will be required to identify the match amount (as opposed to the housing/service providers) and will be required to reasonably commit the match funding for 24 months, even though the innovation funding is a single award (may be used over one or two years, however).

Individual conversations have already begun with the family housing and service providers. The intention is to help them fully understand the strategic plan and to prompt thoughts about how they might leverage their current funding by shifting their current models to bring them in line with the strategic plan.

During the fourth quarter of 2010 conversations will continue with WorkForce Central, all public school McKinney-Vento Liaisons, Children's Administration, local Community Colleges and Trade Schools, the Lutheran Public Policy Office, and the Coalition to End Homelessness (to ensure all potential partners are notified). The goal of these conversations will be to advance the implementation of this plan, but also to gain

more clarity about the availability of match funding (e.g., the Community Colleges creating a track to focus on the unique needs of families coming out of homelessness, and the potential innovation funding that can be leveraged).

In general Innovation grants will not be used to provide basic housing and services, but instead to spark new approaches to the existing housing and service system.

Outside the direct homelessness system, match is being considered in some local school districts, Workforce Development Council, Children's Administration, DSHS, WorkForce Central, local colleges and trade schools, and the faith community. Some detail is provided below of the total currently used for family housing and services for people at risk of or coming out of homelessness. Regardless of the detail below, it is important to note the intended work with these important systems. Over time it is expected that these partnerships will strengthen and match will be available through their mainstream funding. It is important to note that even without match funding coming from each of these systems, the partnerships are expected to yield significant support of the system and the target families.

Key personnel have been identified in each of the systems noted above and are working directly with County staff and providers to develop the parameters of the partnership and how they can best help. Every system involved in this initiative has been positive about working toward enhanced partnerships.

Funder	Annual Amount Currently Spent	Reasonable Likelihood of being used as match in first two years
Pierce County	\$5.9M	\$2M
City of Tacoma	\$1.5M	\$500K•
City of Lakewood	\$500K	*•
United Way of Pierce County	\$232K	\$529K♦
WorkForce Central	\$1.8M	\$860K€
Tacoma Housing Authority	\$5.3M	\$1.1M¥
Pierce County Housing Authority	\$575K	\$250K¥
Associated Ministries	\$788K	\$500K
Private Foundation	\$533K	®
Public Schools	\$246KV	√
Colleges/Trade Schools	\$130Mμ	μ
Child Welfare	∞	∞

*The City of Lakewood Community and Economic Development Departments are in the process of applying for several million dollars in funding from various sources, some of which may be eligible for match for this initiative.

•Funding for the Cities of Tacoma and Lakewood come mostly from state and federal sources, but both cities use some general fund dollars for housing and services.

♦Amount UWPC will devote to housing and economic self-sufficiency.

€Local Workforce Investment Act funds dedicated to adult services.

¥Housing Authority funding comes from a variety of sources and accounts for investments in housing subsidies and services.

®One step in the implementation of the plan is communications outreach to the private foundation community in Pierce County. The goal of this outreach will be educating private funders about the plan, its purposes and the implications of the funding priorities. This outreach will help private foundations to respond to funding requests from local nonprofits in ways that align with the plan. Staff from the Ben B. Cheney Foundation participated in the development of the plan and will continue to assist with the communications outreach. The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation has agreed to sit on the Oversight Group of Funders. A further step in the implementation of the plan will be formulating a method for assessing how private foundation grants may be eligible to be considered as local match within the plan.

√This accounts for only Tacoma Public School District- this is the budget for the McKinney-Vento activities. There are 16 other school districts in Pierce County.

μThis is the total educational budget for four institutions (Tacoma Community College, Bates Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, and Pierce College). Certainly the majority of students are not likely formally in families that are coming out of, or at risk of, homelessness. But some small fraction of this educational fund can be available for match if the institutions are able to make some shifts in the way they assist the target population.

∞This is an important place-holder. While we have not yet determined potential match for Child Welfare, it is an area of import for this initiative, so it was determined we should put a place-holder to be clear about future intentions.

For the first year the funding focus will be on Centralized Intake and Prevention. \$500K is allocated for Centralized Intake and \$250K for Prevention (from 2163 funding) for the first year. This can be used as match (based upon a formula estimating the percentage of families versus individuals using these services) for Innovation Funds administered by Building Changes. The intention is for these funds to be secured with a single application, a single review process, and two boards making final decisions (the 2060/2163 Steering Committee, and the Building Changes Board of Directors).

Approximately \$870K has been set aside from the increase in 2163 funding to be awarded in the first quarter of 2011. An RFP process is underway as of this date, and three successful applicants have responded to a Letter of Interest for the Centralized Intake.

A full RFP will be released in September, 2010, with the intention to select the provider(s) by November 1, allowing 60 days for the successful bidders to ramp up their infrastructure.

It is expected there will be an opportunity for other providers to shift the way they do business to align with the Strategic Plan, allowing them to propose innovative practices to secure Innovation Grant funding, while using their existing services as potential match. Details for how this will work (whether it needs to be at contract renewal time, or if the Oversight Group of Funders can call for a particular practice to be developed, or if agencies can simply apply as they shift their business has yet to be determined through dialogue between Pierce County, the Oversight Group of Funders, and Building Changes.

As a significant partner, WorkForce Central is a significant partner in that they have agreed to enhance the skills of some of their front door staff to prepare them for the unique needs of families coming out of homelessness. This will allow them to better navigate the system for these families, creating opportunities for them to train and compete for living wage jobs. The amount of funding WorkForce Central is willing to use as match for innovation funding is substantial.

The Housing Authorities' contribution of staff and voucher resources also makes them a significant partner. Additionally they were part of the original Memorandum of Understanding as this planning process unfolded. Their presence throughout the planning process, and their continued investment in the implementation is essential to the success of ending family homelessness.

Advocacy Efforts

Pierce County is working to identify barriers to policy implementation at the local level and the Tri-County effort will work to identify barriers to policy implementation at the state level. Within Pierce County, the coordination of political and legislative advocacy efforts will include aligning with King and Snohomish Counties, and the advocacy organizations funded through this initiative, to ensure consistency of efforts.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will be contracting directly with some advocacy organizations in each of the three demonstration counties to focus on state and federal funding in collaboration with the three counties. The focus of work for those organizations selected will be change at the local, state, and federal level- more specifically, change that moves legislation and public will in support of the initiative to end family homelessness.

A specific emphasis of this work include advocacy aimed at changing policies that impede economic opportunities for families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. As stated throughout this plan, families without the ability to secure a family wage, with wage progression, will continue to be at high risk of returning to homelessness. While this initiative cannot eliminate all risk of homelessness, long-term economic solutions *can* decrease the number of families at high risk of homelessness.

Where possible, there will be inclusion of local, state, and federal trade organizations such as Association of County Human Services, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, Tacoma/Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Washington State Training and Education Coordinating Board, the United Way of Pierce County, etc. in communications aimed at large-scale systems change.

Ensure advocacy efforts do not stop at housing and services, but include change associated with employment and educational services and coordinate with efforts with local education and employment systems.

In addition to the local, state, and national advocacy efforts headed by the larger initiative, Pierce County will develop its own communication plan during Phase III of the planning process. The target populations will include: local governments, all potential funders, housing and service providers within the homeless system, partnering systems (such as workforce development and property managers), and service recipients. The initial communication roll-out will include: 1) a snapshot of the goals of the initiative, 2) a snapshot of the current system; 3) an outline of the proposed system changes (both immediate and longer-term; 4) the organizations and systems involved in the changes; and 5) expected timelines and outcomes.

Where logical, coordinate all advocacy and communication efforts with King and Snohomish Counties, Building Changes, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the organizations selected to complete the advocacy work within the three demonstration counties.



Evaluation

Westat, a national research company located in Rockville, Maryland, will be responsible for the evaluation of this initiative. Westat has extensive experience and expertise in the area of homelessness and provides research services to agencies of the U.S. Government, as well as businesses, foundations, and state and local governments.

In addition to working with each of the demonstration counties, Westat will also work directly with the Washington State Departments of Commerce and Social and Health Services to collect the data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the plans and their effect on the local systems associated with ending family homelessness.

The evaluation will have elements that look at overall systems change, as well as change within target organizations within each county. Given that the number of demonstration counties is so limited, additional conclusions will be drawn from the study by including comparison counties for the purposes of study.

The evaluation will occur over five years and focus on process description as well as actual outcomes. This will be accomplished by longitudinally studying individual families, specific organizations, and entire systems within both the demonstration and comparison counties.

Families will be assessed at 3, 12, and 18 months post-baseline, and organizations and systems will be studied on an annual basis via site visits.

Westat has been involved at key junctures to ensure the data being collected at the county level will be of value in the evaluation. In addition to having membership on the Washington Families Fund Leadership Team, Westat has been present in person or by teleconference in many of the counties' Steering Committee meetings.

Finally, there will be a cost study component. This area of the study will analyze each program pillar through identification of costs arising from resources used by families and providers. The purpose will be to assess the short-term and long-term costs of a coordinated system in comparison to the status quo and the relative costs of implementing the components of the system.

APPENDIX A

COMPACT FOR CHANGE

The Compact is being signed by the undersigned effective as of _____, for the purpose of articulating a statement of intent to support the goals and objectives of the strategic plan for ending family homelessness in Pierce County. Support may include funding, but may also include other activities such as education, advocacy, and alignment of policy and strategies. Ultimately signing of this document commits the undersigned to a process, which is outlined below.

1. Purpose:

This Compact is intended to describe the process through which the undersigned will engage related to plans to end family homelessness and focuses on:

- a. The creation of policy alignment with the strategic plan to end family homelessness
- b. The creation of funding strategies in line with the emerging alignment of policies
- c. The provision of outreach and education to the funders not included as signers on this agreement
- d. The monitoring of progress toward the implementation of the plan to end family homelessness

2. Background:

The Washington Families Fund (administered by Building Changes), with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector funders, is seeking to expand its work in targeted counties in the Puget Sound region of Washington state in an effort to test emerging new concepts and strategies that have proven effective in reducing family homelessness in a number of communities across the United States.

The Foundation and Building Changes have asked Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties to develop plans specific to ending family homelessness with the ultimate goal being for each county to identify a series of systems change interventions related to five strategies the Foundation hypothesizes will have the greatest impact. These key concepts/strategies include prevention, coordinated entry, rapid re-housing, tailored programs and economic opportunities.

The Family Homelessness Planning efforts being conducted in Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties are part of an expanding set of investments by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in the work of ending family homelessness in Washington State. In addition to the County Plans, the Foundation will also be investing in 1) Growing the role of Building Changes to assume a leadership position as the administrator of the expanding activities of the Washington Families Fund; 2)

Convening key stakeholders in all three target counties to identify both existing and new opportunities for increased collaboration and coordination with activities that are already underway, (e.g., the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness); 3) Expanding advocacy activities related to the needs of homeless families; and 4) Creating a framework for measuring and evaluating the impact of this work.

The Pierce County Executive created a diverse Steering Committee to oversee the work of creating a strategic plan to end family homelessness. Committee membership included government and private funders, representatives from universities, housing authorities, workforce development and K-12 public school systems. In addition, the Steering Committee created three work groups to assist in the development of the plan: the Prevention and Re-Housing work group, the Coordinated Entry and Tailored Services work group, and the Economic Opportunities work group. These work groups were chaired by Steering Committee members and membership included staff from provider agencies, the county, and Building Changes.

The strategies created by the work groups, and approved by the Steering Committee, were presented to families experiencing and coming out of homelessness to allow their voice of experience to inform the development of the strategic plan.

The development of the plan was divided into three stages. First, an extensive Landscape Assessment was completed. This work included a detailed analysis of all of the county's existing resources and systems for addressing the needs of homeless families, and an estimate of the number of homeless families in need of services. Second, specific strategies for the five key strategy areas (prevention, coordinated entry, rapid re-housing, tailored programs and economic opportunities) were developed, with the intent that these strategies would result in meaningful systems-change. Third, an implementation plan describing timelines, responsibilities, and desired outcomes was created.

As the efforts move into the implementation stage of the work, it is important to have a body to oversee the implementation of the plan, develop some structures to support the plan moving forward- in the form of policy and funding alignment, as well as keep other funders informed of the direction of funding policy.

3. Principles Guiding the Implementation of the Plan

The signers of this Compact agree to work toward and promote a comprehensive systems-change approach to ending homelessness in Pierce County and by signing express allegiance to the following principles developed by the Steering Committee:

- Every individual and organization working to help people in Pierce County experiencing or at risk of homelessness is committed to ending homelessness
- The approach to ending homelessness looks at the whole person and the whole family

- Each decision/investment is made with the larger system in mind by a community committed to ending homelessness
- Investments are made for permanent, sustainable change
- The system should be built with ease of access for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Emerging best practices for ending homelessness are considered on an ongoing basis
- While emergency shelter is an important component of any fully functioning continuum of care, it is not the key to ending homelessness
- Homelessness is not seen as an issue for just funders and social service providers, but also for partners such as education, government, workforce development, economic development and research
- Partnerships of public and private entities have an important role in ending homelessness.

4. Values that Shape the Strategies

In addition to the principles described above, the Steering Committee created value statements to influence the crafting of the specific strategies. The signers of the compact by signing this compact express support for these values as fundamental in implementing the strategic plan- an approach that is:

- ***Collaborative:*** Stakeholders from any individual system cannot by themselves solve family homelessness, solution requires action in multiple systems, such as: homeless providers and funders, faith community, workforce development systems, education systems, etc. Involving these systems is paramount to the systems-change strategies success.
- ***Responsive and Simplistic:*** All components of the system are designed to make things less complex for families. Families get the exact services they need, when they need them. Services are not wasted on families that don't need them.
- ***Based on Comprehensive Assessment:*** All families accessing assistance with prevention or re-housing will receive a standardized, comprehensive assessment to ensure all life domains (especially those related to homelessness risk), are addressed.
- ***Holistic and Family-Centered:*** For every family assessed as needing prevention or re-housing assistance, all life domains requiring attention get addressed by either the primary housing or service provider, or through partner specialty organizations.
- ***Preventive:*** Prevention of homelessness (especially permanent prevention) is always the best option.
- ***Focused on home-like settings:*** Emergency shelters are reserved for true emergencies, when there are no other options available.

5. Role and Responsibilities of the Parties

The signers of the Compact agree to work collaboratively in representation of their organizations to achieve the following:

- a. Commit to participation in an oversight committee
- b. Align their policies consistent with the strategic plan for ending family homelessness
- c. Adapt their funding strategies in line with those policies
- d. Develop a list of funders within, and outside, the family homelessness system whose funding may impact the system, and communicate policies and funding strategies with them. Identify and work with funders to align their policies and funding strategies with the strategic plan.
- e. Monitor and evaluate the progress of the strategic plan implementation. Recommend changes to the plan, as warranted, to their respective organizations.

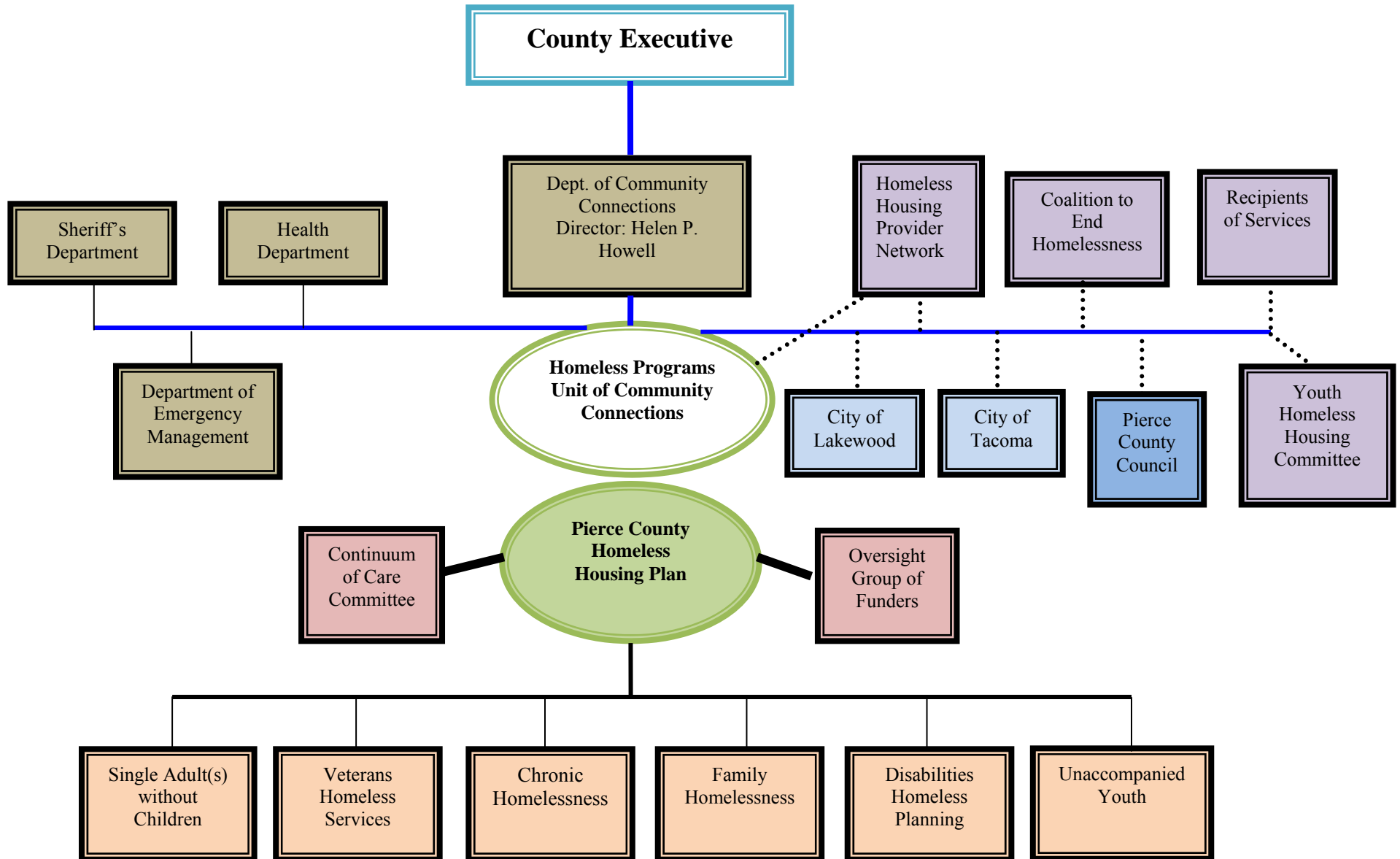
6. Term

The strategic plan has a three-year implementation life. The undersigned are committing to a process that includes the monitoring of the implementation. Therefore the initial commitment is three years.

List of Signees

PIERCE COUNTY HOMELESSNESS STRUCTURE

December 27, 2011



Pierce County Homeless Policy Structure

Definitions

- **County Executive:** Sets policy for Pierce County Departments and their staff. Executes policy set by the County Council. Oversees operations of Pierce County- approximately 3,000 staff.
- **Pierce County Sheriff:** Oversees the sheriff department which includes 329 law enforcement officers, 305 correction officers and 145 civilian personnel.
- **Department of Emergency Management (DEM):** The mission of DEM is to prepare pierce County for disaster through public education, training, planning and building interagency cooperation.
- **Pierce County Health Department:** The mission is to enhance personal and community health through innovative programs and information.
- **Pierce County Council:** Sets policy and approves the annual budget for the second-largest county in Washington State.
- **Pierce County Human Services:** Human Services is comprised of four main units (Aging & Long Term Care, Chemical Dependency, Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health) and a support service (Operations). Each unit is responsible for comprehensive plans; service provision, administration and monitoring; and providing technical assistance to community agencies. Human Services also provides direct services for clients and training of providers.
- **Department of Community Services:** The Department of Community Services consists of five service divisions; Arts & Cultural Services, Community Action, Community Development, WSU Extension Services and Housing Programs.
- **Coordination of Homeless Policy:** This activity represents the initiatives to end homelessness which includes the Pierce County Homeless Housing Plan, and its subcomponents- chronic

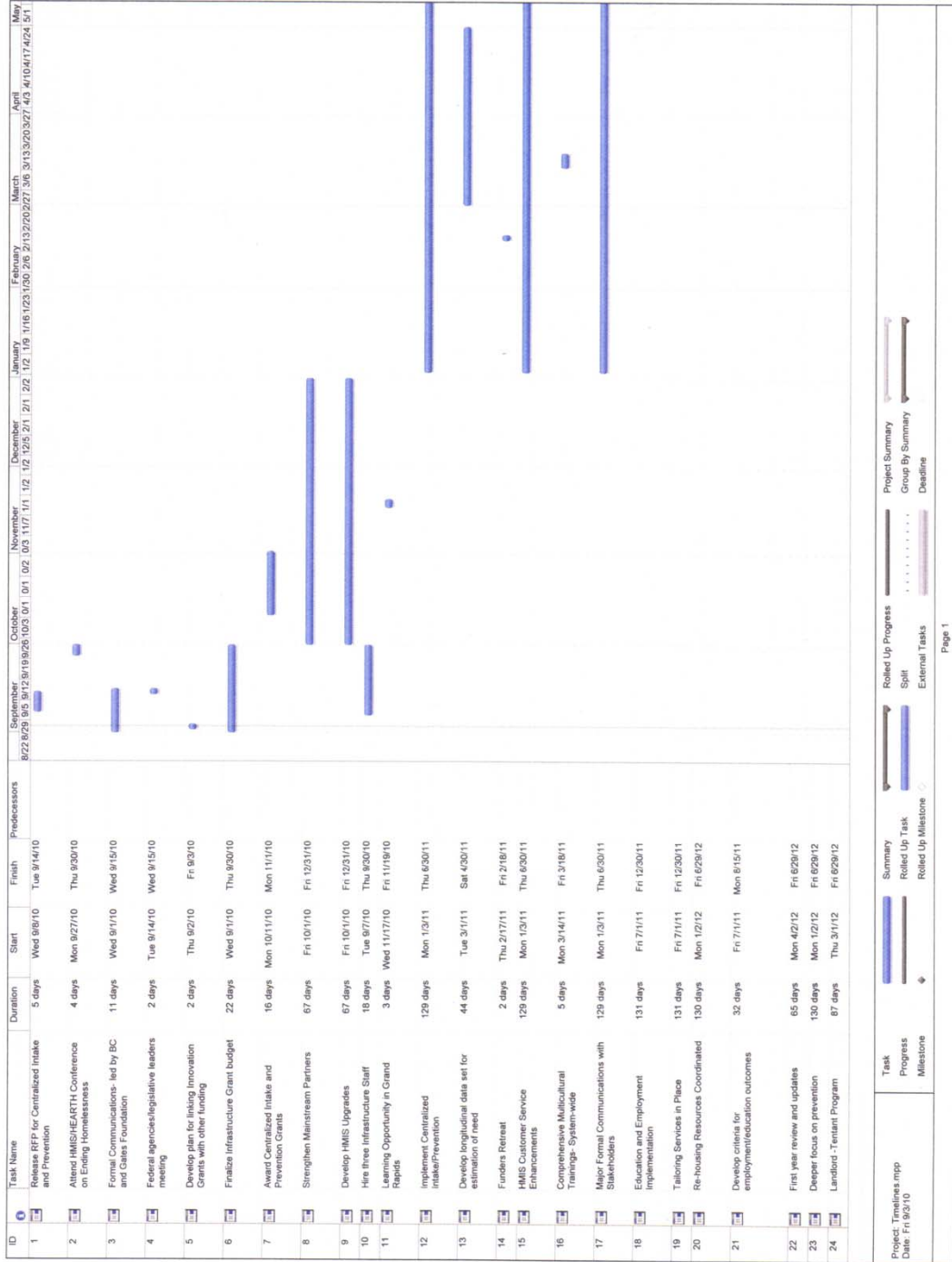
homelessness, family homelessness, disabilities populations, veterans, unaccompanied youth, etc.

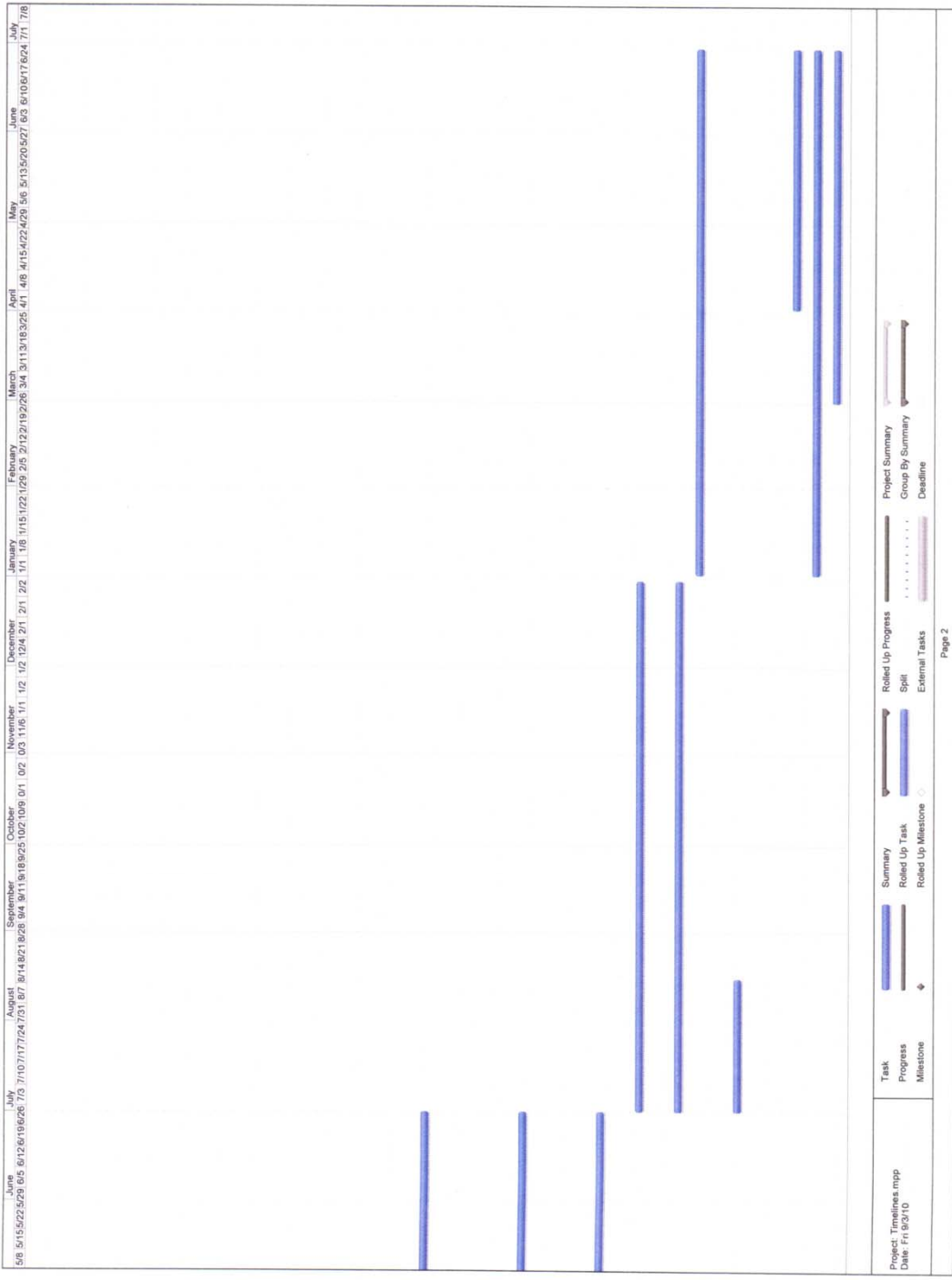
- **Pierce County Homeless Housing Plan:** Ten year plan to end homelessness in Pierce County. The first benchmark is to decrease homelessness by 50% in ten years.
- **The Tacoma/Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness:** It is the mission of the Coalition to preserve and create affordable housing, prevent homelessness, restore homeless person's to stable living environments, and promote community awareness of homeless issues **through** education, legislative advocacy, mutual support and the sharing of resources.
- **The Continuum of Care:** A Continuum of Care plan is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet specific needs of people who experience homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. The functions of Pierce County's Continuum of Care Committee include: increase eligibility for federal housing funds, develop and oversee plans to end homelessness, and recommend priority activities for annual funding, based upon those plans.
- **Oversight Group of Funders:** A new group designed to oversee the funding associated with the Family Homelessness Plan (at least initially). Their charge is to align policies with the strategic plan to end family homelessness, and then align their funding with those policies. They will also be one of the groups overseeing the implementation of the family homelessness effort.
- **Housing Provider Network:** A group of homeless housing and services providers who advise the larger system and its funders on homeless planning and priorities.

- **Recipients of Services:** All Pierce County residents who utilize (or are eligible to utilize) services within the homeless housing and service network.

APPENDIX C

Work Plan Timeline





APPENDIX D

Proposed Investment Budget for First Year

Category of Expenditure	Amount	Fund Source
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 432,084	Infrastructure Granting
Hardware and Software	\$ 50,000	Infrastructure Granting
Training Opportunities	\$ 46,000	Infrastructure Granting
Physical Space and Infrastructure	\$ 94,604	Infrastructure Granting
IT Consultation	\$ 50,000	Infrastructure Granting
Other	\$ 19,092	Infrastructure Granting
System Change Support	\$ 58,220	Infrastructure Granting
Centralized Intake	\$ 500,000	2163
Prevention	\$ 250,000	2163
Centralized Intake	\$ 170,000	Building Changes SIG
Prevention	\$ 85,000	Building Changes SIG
Innovative Service Programming*	\$ 2,303,125	2163, HUD CoC, Cities of Tacoma/Lakewood
Innovative Service Programming*	\$ 921,950	Building Changes SIG
Educational and Employment Programs	\$ 500,000	Workforce Investment Act
Educational and Employment Programs	\$ 200,000	Building Changes SIG
Total 2011 Investment*	\$ 5,680,075	

*Up to this amount, pending progress